



NEW

THE **EVERYTHING** **YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT**

MIDDLE AGES

FROM THE FALL OF ROME TO THE RISE OF EUROPE

+PLUS

BYZANTINES
ANGLO-SAXONS
NORMANS
OTTOMANS
AND MORE

Digital
Edition

FUTURE

SECOND EDITION

DARK AGES?

What really happened after Rome fell?

HORDES & HOARDS

Invading armies and the incredible treasures that they pursued

AGE OF CHIVALRY

The rise of the knight and the ideals behind the iconic warrior class revealed





Welcome

The Middle Ages lasted for a thousand years, and in that time the world changed dramatically. There were three distinct periods in Medieval times: the Early Middle Ages, sometimes inaccurately called the Dark Ages, when Europe reeled from the fall of Rome; the High Middle Ages, when Medieval society, technology and culture blossomed into the chivalrous world we still idealise today; and the Late Middle Ages, when that golden age was riven once more by wars, famines and plagues. Together, these three eras paved the road to the Renaissance and ushered in many concepts and cultural institutions that we're still familiar with today. Let's find out how that happened...

「 FUTURE 」

THE **EVERYTHING** YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT **MIDDLE AGES**

Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA

Editorial

Editor **April Madden**
Senior Designer **Lora Barnes**
Compiled by **Dan Peel & Andy Downes**
Senior Art Editor **Andy Downes**
Head of Art & Design **Greg Whitaker**
Editorial Director **Jon White**

Cover Images

Joe Cummings

Photography

Getty and Alamy

All copyrights and trademarks are recognised and respected

Advertising

Media packs are available on request
Commercial Director **Clare Dove**

International

Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**
licensing@futurenet.com

Circulation

Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production

Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Matthew Eglinton**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Managers **Keely Miller, Nola Cokely,
Vivienne Calvert, Fran Twentyman**

Printed by William Gibbons, 26 Planetary Road,
Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XT

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU
www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9001

Everything You Need to Know About the Middle Ages
Second Edition (AHB4240)


© 2022 Future Publishing Limited



Some content previously appeared in
this edition of **Medieval History**

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this bookazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards. The paper holds full FSC or PEFC certification and accreditation.

All contents © 2022 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher, Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein.



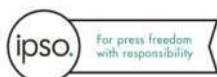
FUTURE

Connectors.
Creators.
Experience
Makers.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

Chief executive **Zillah Byng-Thorne**
Non-executive chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief financial officer **Rachel Addison**

Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244



Contents

8 HOW THE MEDIEVAL ERA CHANGED THE WORLD

From the printing press to the longbow, the Middle Ages hauled European civilisation out of the ancient era and into the modern world

16 WHAT DID THE BYZANTINES DO FOR US?

The Byzantine legacy - from the Renaissance to religion, language, law, and... forks

24 RISE OF THE HOLY EMPIRE

The dominant institution in the lives of kings and peasants alike, the Church promised heavenly salvation to all yet frequently delivered earthly schism

28 ORIGINS OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS

Where did the Anglo-Saxons come from and how many of them were there in the first place?

32 THE ADVENT OF FEUDALISM

Discover how to rule a united land of loyal followers

34 CHARLEMAGNE

The father of Europe and ruler of much of France and Germany, Charlemagne made his name as a king but left a legacy as the first Roman emperor since the 5th century

38 THE ISLAMIC GOLDEN AGE

After the fall of the Roman Empire, Islam began to flourish, and brought about a new wave of advancements in medicine, philosophy, alchemy and more

42 WHEN VIKINGS RULED THE WAVES

Portrayed as bloodthirsty pirates, pillaging innocent villagers, Vikings also ruled the waves with a lucrative trade network

50 HOW TO CAPTURE A MEDIEVAL CASTLE

From demolishing walls to starving out defenders, a siege in the Middle Ages required innovative tactics, stamina and determination

58 EVOLUTION OF THE KNIGHT

A knight was the ultimate Medieval warrior, the sharpest weapon a lord could thrust at his foes, and one of the most highly distinguished men in the king's court

64 THE NORMAN CONQUESTS

The Normans didn't just conquer England. These ex-Vikings carved out kingdoms and principalities through Europe and beyond

68 THE DOMESDAY BOOK

The most ambitious land survey in the whole of Europe was designed to strengthen William the Conqueror's grip on England and Wales, and their resources



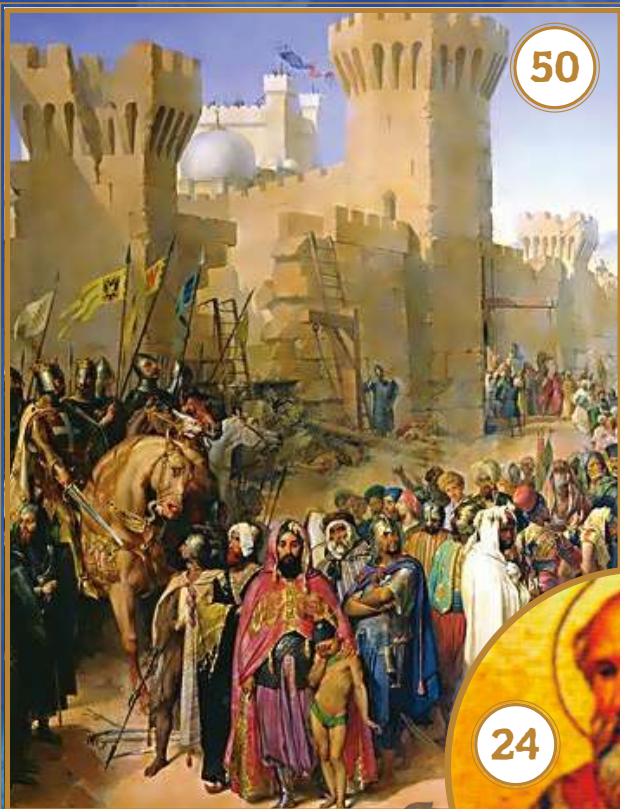
84



28



58



50

24



42



82

70 THE CRUSADES IN THE HOLY LAND

Religious tensions and territorial struggles spilled over into a series of wars for possession of the sacred city of Jerusalem and its surrounding area

72 THE BIRTH OF MAGNA CARTA

In the time that Bad King John would earn his infamous moniker, a band of nobles would force a wayward monarch to finally respect the needs of the realm

76 INVADING EASTERN EUROPE

The Mongol gaze turns westward, ushering in an era of conquest and territorial expansion

82 MARCO POLO'S TRAVELS

The young son of a Venetian merchant family expanded the horizons of the known world, although he wasn't believed at the time

84 THE RISE OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

From humble beginnings, the Ottomans went on to conquer lands in three continents, forging an empire that lasted for 600 years

92 A CENTURY OF BLOODSHED

Over 100 years of dynastic disputes in the Hundred Years War

98 A GATHERING STORM

The origins of the Wars of the Roses. How can we account for one of the most famous conflicts in English history?

108 DOWNFALL AND LEGACY OF THE KNIGHTS

The masters of the Medieval battlefield, knights had their spurs stripped by advancing technology



How the MIDDLEVEAL ERA CHANGED THE WORLD

From the printing press to the longbow, the Middle Ages hauled European civilisation out of the ancient era and into the modern age



he fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 changed Europe drastically, as Odoacer overthrew the last Western emperor, Romulus Augustulus. Centuries of centralised

rule from Rome came crashing down as the Visigoths, Vandals, Franks, Saxons and Vikings began to exert their influence. The era is known as a time when bloodthirsty barbarian hordes rampaged across the land and the Catholic Church called all the religious and political shots in a time known as the Dark Ages. While there was a decline in social order after the removal of the Roman Empire, the era from the fall of the Romans to the birth of the Renaissance was vital to the growth of the old world. The new inhabitants of Europe were colonisers as well as invaders.

The progress of the Middle Ages was spread across a wide spectrum. The sheer number of

wars over territory and religion meant military techniques advanced drastically. The Crusades, for instance, brought western European society into contact with the Islamic world and the Byzantine Empire, which were both experiencing golden eras of progress. There were also advancements in society, medicine and economics as communities progressed despite

bloodshed in wars and loss of life in deadly epidemics like the Black Death, which killed over 75 million people. With the breaking up of the Roman Empire, cultural identities emerged and many regions began to establish ethnic and social conventions that they would be known by for years to come. By the time of the Renaissance, the Medieval world had successfully left the era of classical antiquity behind as populations began to grow, social conventions were put in place, cities prospered and the foundations of modern nations were created. The path to the discovery of the New World and an era of European colonial expansion beckoned.

Europe's total population almost doubled between 1000 and 1350 and even tripled in some areas







A depiction of a Medieval university class in the 1350s

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Discover the Medieval inventions that helped progress the Western world from the shadow of the Roman Empire to the enlightenment of the Renaissance

The feudal system was effective throughout the Middle Ages and led to a multitude of inventions, both developments from ancient ideas and completely new devices. As populations began to expand and the slave force that dominated the Roman world became non-existent, there was a constant need for food. The heavy plough transformed the agricultural world as it allowed heavier soils such as those in northern Europe to be turned into arable farmland. This, along with the horse collar, crop rotation and windmills, greatly helped food production while the invention of the tidal mill supplied clean, drinkable water in reservoirs and demonstrated the growth of Medieval knowledge during the period. These inventions would become invaluable during the Black Death and the Great Famine of 1315-1317.

40,000 books had been printed in 14 European countries by 1500 thanks to the technology of the printing press

An invention that was revolutionary in the Middle Ages was the mechanical clock. Developed in the 13th century, weights drove the device and it would produce a sound on the hour rather than telling the exact time of day. Another creation that would be vital as time progressed was the printing press.

Invented in the 1440s by Johannes Gutenberg, the printing press allowed texts to be mass-produced, meaning culture and knowledge could be spread much quicker than ever before. Printing technology benefitted from the earlier invention of the spinning wheel, which had already increased the production of cloth.

Something not usually associated with the era are glasses, but many claim that the first optical lenses were recorded in 1268 by Friar Roger Bacon. Building on the science behind the first mirrors, these early ideas of optical science were initially only known by monks, but they were

picked up by more and more scholars and, along with the printing press, represented the spread of learning to more social classes than ever before.

The importance of the Church meant that the Bible was the first port of call for knowledge but universities as well as monasteries acted as centres of learning. The University of Bologna in Italy is believed to be one of the first in the world after it opened in the 11th century, and the teaching of theology, law, medicine and letters helped grow an educated class and a bourgeoisie. Even away from universities, the peasantry was becoming more skilled, with trades such as leatherwork and metalwork flourishing. Blacksmiths in particular helped fuel the fledgling mining industry and the Middle Ages saw renewed interest in coal mining, which would later help alleviate the reliance on wood burning, especially in Britain, which experienced an energy crisis in the 16th century. As well as European inventions, devices from China such as the compass and the rudder were incorporated and used, which made travel and conquest significantly easier and quicker.

WARS AND WEAPONRY

The field of battle was revolutionised in the Medieval era, from plate armour to the very first firearms

The Middle Ages were packed full of wars, campaigns and skirmishes. For the first time, cavalry was used on a wide scale and knights on horseback and clad in plate armour were the tanks of the Medieval battlefield. The horse became a military must-have, trampling infantry and rushing crossbowmen. Their impact was strengthened with the mainstream adoption of the horseshoe, which increased the beast's power on the battlefield, and stirrups that helped prevent the rider from falling.

One of the major conflicts of the era was the Hundred Years' War, which raged on and off from 1337 to 1453 and was famous for the longbow. Wielded by Welsh and English archers, it offered much faster shooting than the crossbow and helped decrease the use of heavy cavalry on the battlefield as the arrowheads pierced both chain mail and plate armour. In future post-Middle Ages conflicts such as the Thirty Years' War (which is still one of the most devastating wars in history) in the 17th century, light cavalry was used much more prominently and the first firearms called arquebuses were wielded. They proved clumsy, slow and at times ineffectual, but provided a template and an insight into the future of warfare.

Arquebuses and other primitive firearms were developments of Middle Age weapons like the cannon. Gunpowder was first brought to Europe from the East in the 14th century and would change the battlefield forever. Prior to cannons, assaults on castles and walled cities were conducted by siege weapons such as trebuchets and rams, while the attackers also used more tactical methods such as mining under walls, starving cities and spreading disease within the castle. Gunpowder helped change all of this as battlements were blasted to smithereens. This resulted in the building of stronger concentric castles and the development of cities, as well as larger cannons like the great bombard invented in the early days of the Ottoman Empire.

Many of these new weapons would not have been available if wasn't for a significant progression in metallurgy. Improving on techniques first used in the Iron Age, swords, axes and arrowheads were made stronger and sharper for stronger blows and deeper impacts. This was done by using a blast furnace, which could churn out weaponry of a better quality. Armies were now much larger than ever before and a new era of warfare beckoned.



The Battle of Agincourt was a turning point in warfare, as well as a crushing French defeat in the Hundred Years' War



The engineering of Venetian ships made the city state a huge maritime power

Transport and trade

With no centralised government, people explored far and wide

Europe in the Middle Ages was a society of keen travellers. Whether it was in search of riches, finding living space or escaping pursuers, the borders to different territories were nearly always open. The Carolingian Empire aside, there wasn't any major form of centralised government, so factions were always on the move. Perhaps the greatest movers were the Vikings, who occupied land from the Iberian Peninsula to Constantinople and even reached the New World before anyone else. This was achieved through the use of the iconic longship, which was so well engineered that it had the endurance and the resources to cross the Atlantic, as well as being equally adept in rivers to launch quick raids. The success of the Vikings going west was equalled to the east by Marco Polo. The Italian merchant's journey from 1271 to 1295 strengthened European links with China and gave the West knowledge of silk, resulting in more traffic on the legendary Silk Road.

The road network of Europe was poorly developed and relied primarily on old Roman roads and tracks. Horseback was the best mode of transport, while the rich travelled in litters or carts. The most progress was made on water, with the combination of new rudders, sails and compasses making maritime travel very efficient. These progressions - along with improved equipment like navigational charts, anchors and sea provisions - dragged sea travel out of the lull it had been in since the days of Roman galleys and forward to armadas full of galleons, caravels and fluyts. European navies would dominate across the oceans of the globe in both exploration and war.

SOCIETY AND LAW

With the feudal system in place there was an established yet unbalanced system of law and order in Europe

Medieval Europe was dominated by the feudal system. A monarch was at the top and was supported by barons and knights, who in turn protected and ordered the peasantry, who were divided into skilled and non-skilled workers. Communities gathered around a lord who resided in a manor or castle at the centre of a town and gave them protection in return for working the fields.

The peasants, or serfs, had limited rights but the nobility often pressured the monarch into making rules and regulations. In England, for instance, King John was forced to sign *Magna Carta* in 1215, which limited the king's power over taxes and forced him

to hold trials. This was a turning point as it was the first time a king's power had been governed by law. Over a century later, the Peasants' Revolt of

June 1381 tore England apart as a peasant army marched on London. They were incensed at how the Black Death and the introduction of the Poll Tax to fund the costly Hundred Years' War had depleted their quality of life. The revolt didn't change much for the peasantry initially, but the Poll Tax was later abolished and it sent shockwaves to the nobility about the power of a united population against the elite.

A woman's role in society was considered inferior to that of a man's but they still maintained a key role in Medieval life. Many

were skilled just like men in hunting, medicine, toolmaking or playing music and the era had many famous female names such as Joan of Arc and Eleanor of Aquitaine. One institution that was often above the law was the Church. Religion played a major part in Medieval life and the Catholic Church was the dominant institution up until the Reformation. The money that poured into the Church allowed it to teach Latin and play a major role in government as well as build huge cathedrals, the most impressive buildings of the age.

The effects of the Hundred Years' War and the Wars of the Roses changed society, giving the Church and the feudal system less power as the Reformation and the Renaissance came into view. Government was pretty much non-existent - at least as the institution we know it as today - but the Medieval communes did give men the vote with annual elections for councillors.

Though it had mostly died out in Europe by the end of the 15th century, serfdom wasn't abolished in Russia until 1861



The Peasants' Revolt was instigated by the turmoil caused during the Black Death and a harsh Poll Tax



Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, united Western Europe and helped sow the seeds for the future identities of France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany

THE CAROLINGIAN RENAISSANCE

Charlemagne's Frankish Empire was the powerhouse of Western Europe and heralded a new period of learning

The classic 'Renaissance' is believed to have been kickstarted at the end of the Middle Ages but there were periods of enlightenment before this accepted period of rebirth occurred. The most prominent was the Carolingian Renaissance led by the famous king of the Franks, Charlemagne, who promoted policies that revived art, education and culture.

For instance, in 789 the emperor ruled that every monastery must have a school for boys, as he believed there was a growing neglect for learning in the realm he ruled. These reforms introduced an increased copying of texts, which was the quickest method of distribution before the invention of the printing press centuries later. Charlemagne's capital was in Aix-la-Chapelle (modern day Aachen) and his palace was modelled in a Romanesque style that recalled the days of Rome. His empire frequently traded with Vikings and Saxons in

the North Sea, giving the Franks access to swords, pottery and glass, and they also traded southwards with Venetian merchants. Perhaps the longest lasting effect was the standardisation of the French currency. The monarchy controlled all the empire's mints and the system was so good that it was then adopted in England by King Offa of Mercia, where the structures remained in place until the 20th century.

The new network of education may only have been available for a small group of nobles in the upper classes, but in time this would filter down to other levels of society. After Charlemagne's death in 814, his empire became fractured and the Middle Age learning curve dipped once more. However, the emperor's work had been done and this short period of enlightenment became the basis for growth in Western Europe.

Medicine

The Black Death hit Medieval Europe hard, but it helped usher in progress in medicine in the long term

Middle Age medicine was completely unprepared for the considerable carnage that was caused by the Black Death, but benefitted from the knowledge learnt during the outbreak. The largest epidemic in Europe was the two dark years of 1348 and 1350, when an estimated 1.5 million died in England alone. Quarantines were first introduced in the Republic of Ragusa (now Dubrovnik, Croatia) in 1377 and involved keeping the infected away from the public, reducing the spread of diseases in the process. Although this was based on the false idea of miasmas, which stated that disease was spread by poisonous airborne vapours, it did minimise casualties and opened the door for further scientific thought into medicine, culminating in Louis Pasteur's germ theory in the 19th century.

Nonetheless, medicine was generally poor in the Medieval era as towns were often filthy and illness and disease were rampant. Cures such as trepanning and bloodletting often made things worse, as did a blind devotion to religion to cure people of their ills. Personal hygiene and the knowledge of medicine was much improved in both the Islamic World and the Byzantine Empire. The former had hospitals called Bimaristans in its major cities and *Al-Hawi*, a 30 volume medical encyclopedia, while the latter had, in its capital Constantinople, *xenon*, which acted as hospitals and shelters and ensured patients were given the best facilities available.



Medieval medicine killed more than it saved and learnt the hard way after the Black Death

THE WRITTEN WORD

The work of Chaucer and other literature was a giant leap forward in Europe's capability to read and write

Prior to the Carolingian Empire, all scripts, both Greek and Roman, were written in all-capital letters without any spaces. This all changed in the 9th century when both lower case letters and spaces were introduced in the Carolingian Miniscule. A huge leap forward in calligraphy, it was part of Charlemagne's educational reforms and still forms the basis of words and sentences today. The addition of the printing press in the 15th century saw the first punctuation being used as the written word spread over Europe, helping more to learn to read and write. In England the major text of the period was Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The text is an epic poem about a group of pilgrims on a journey to Canterbury Cathedral and was one of the first to be written

Chaucer achieved fame during his lifetime, and was the first poet to be buried in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey

in English, allowing the general public, who weren't fluent in Latin or French, to read it. It is believed that the book is responsible for the first inclusion of many English words used today and set the bar for future English literature and the idea of characters being relatable to the readers who encountered them. Another first in the Medieval era was illustrations in books. Most ancient illustrations were diagrams, but in the Middle Ages pictorial images to supplement text became the norm. The use of illustrations helped those who were illiterate to understand books and were undoubtedly a precursor to the images in newspapers, books and magazines.

Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* revolved around English life and was one of the first texts that had relatable characters



MONEY AND ECONOMICS

The birth of banking and urbanisation can be traced back to the Middle Ages

Bankers have a lot to thank the Middle Ages for. Banking, as we know it today, was first started in the Medieval era. Bills of exchange were created to prevent coinage being carried over long and possibly treacherous journeys and there was even deposit banking which was very similar to the bonds and savings accounts we put our money away in for safe keeping in the 21st century. Once again the Hundred Years' War was instrumental in this development, and the cost of the lengthy war resulted in the first type of government bonds to help keep the economy afloat after the impact of severe debts.

The dual increase in the economy and public health helped feed growing urbanisation. Cities like London, Paris and Milan first reached prominence in the Middle Ages and Constantinople had a population of as many as 800,000 people by the 10th century. The rapid construction of towns and cities was instigated by the invention of the wheelbarrow in the 1170s, the increasing talent



How the Medieval era changed the world

Culture

From cathedrals to music, Medieval societies weren't shy in expressing themselves

The Islamic World was leagues ahead of western Europe for a time and this even extended into having fun. Chess was first played in India in the 6th century but spread through Persia until it reached Europe in the 15th century and evolved into the board and pieces we know today. Oil painting was first done in the Medieval era with Flemish painter Jan van Eyck the first to pioneer it. His work was some of the first known Renaissance painting and would influence generations of great European painters. Music also received a boost in complexity as troubadour ballads were worked into multiple part songs.

Even though the Islamic caliphates were ahead of Europe in medicine, the Crusades and the Reconquista showcased Europe's fast-

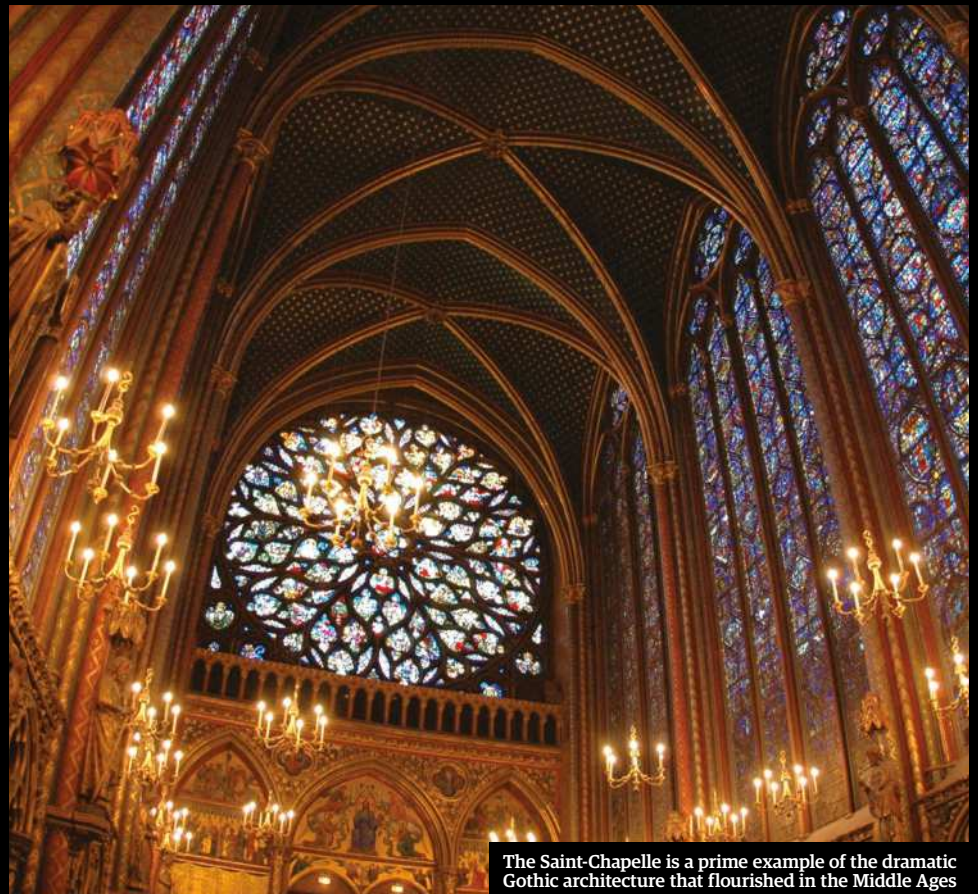
growing military prowess. The Reconquista in particular drove the Muslim Moors out of the Iberian Peninsula and gave Spain an identity it would carry through to become one of the biggest empires in the world. Roman ideas continued to have an influence in the early Medieval world, especially in architecture, where the Romanesque aesthetic was seen all over Europe in abbeys, churches and monasteries. By the 12th century, this had changed to a more Gothic style, which can be seen today in some of the most impressive cathedrals in Europe. Paris, Cologne, Salisbury and Reims all include flying buttresses and vaulted ribs, allowing engineers to build higher structures and more impressive stained glass windows.

Islamic and Byzantine art was heavily influential in the paintings and architecture of Medieval Europe

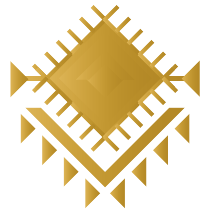


Where previously stories had been memorised and recited, now they began to be written down and illustrated

of stonemasons and the Artesian Well, which allowed water to be forced from the ground without resorting to pumping. The Black Death actually helped the economy in the long term as labour shortages meant the survivors could choose which baron they worked for. Consequently lords battled over conditions, increasing the importance of serfs in society. A negative effect of the Black Death was the blame culture prompted by the epidemic. Faith in organized religion took a nose dive after praying had seemingly no effect on reducing the pain of the buboes, but Christians took to blaming the Jews for their woes. The Jewish population fled to Eastern Europe where they remained until the rise of Nazism and the horrors of the Holocaust.



The Saint-Chapelle is a prime example of the dramatic Gothic architecture that flourished in the Middle Ages



WHAT DID THE BYZANTINES DO

for us!

The Byzantine legacy – from the Renaissance to religion, language, law and... forks



he Byzantine Empire, or the Roman Empire, as the Byzantines called themselves, lasted for more than 1,000 years. Its impact on the contemporary world throughout modern history, long after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, remains evident through its achievements, lasting legacy and influence. Indeed, the Byzantines live on not only through their inventions, which are still being used today, but also other aspects of Byzantine life that have since been adopted by modern countries, such as symbols and art styles.

One of the greatest intellectual movements in human history – which the Byzantines contributed greatly to – was the Renaissance, the transition from the Middle Ages to modernity. In the final years before the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans, many Byzantines fled to the West to escape the foreseeable havoc. Among those émigrés were educated individuals with an immaculate knowledge of Greek, and they were willing to disseminate it to the Western world. In turn, the Italian audience received them gladly.

Indeed, the knowledge of Greek these scholars brought was much craved in the West, as scholars had become increasingly interested in ancient Greek texts. As such, the Byzantine immigrants taught in universities and privately. Their greatest achievement, however, came in translating many of the ancient Greek texts into Latin, the result being that the writings of Plato, Aristotle and

others suddenly became easily accessible. The modern person might think of Byzantium as something dark, backwards and even corrupted. But this assessment is far from the truth. The Byzantines created many things that are taken for granted today. One of the most important developments was that of hospitals, without which medical care would not be what it is today. The first hospital in the modern sense was built around 372-379, in Cappadocia, by Basil of Caesarea. Previous institutions that resembled hospitals had admitted people who were sick, but those did not try to cure patients.

Instead, individuals essentially went to hospital for an early form of palliative care to be administered before death. By contrast, Basil's institution had doctors, a leprosarium, and aimed to heal patients rather than simply offer them shelter.

Soon after this Cappadocian innovation, hospitals started being built around the empire, through private donations or through the Church and its charity. The Byzantines evolved the idea of hospitals further in the following centuries. The most well-known Byzantine hospital was housed in the monastery of Pantokrator and it was one of the first philanthropic institutions worldwide. In this hospital, records of medical treatments were kept by physicians, and two doctors would examine patients and monitor their treatments. Furthermore, the senior doctors would listen to patient's complaints. Overall, Byzantine hospitals offered a humane environment that had been absent until then, and helped shaped the modern interpretation of healthcare.

Byzantine hospitals were known as 'xenon', or houses for strangers, the biggest being Constantinople's Pantocrator



© Gettyimages



Virgin with the Child, Hagia Sophia

The Christianisation of the Russians

Why did the Russians decide to convert to Eastern Orthodox Christianity?

The *Russian Primary Chronicle*, written in the first half of the 12th Century, offers a fascinating story about the Christianisation of the nation. The vast majority of Russians were pagan until 988 CE, when Vladimir I, the prince of Kiev, converted to Christianity and made it the official religion of his state.

According to the *Primary Chronicle*, Vladimir sent the wisest men of the kingdom to neighbouring kingdoms and empires in order to find out which religion was the best. When they returned, Vladimir was informed that the Muslims of Volga Bulgaria did not eat pork and did not consume alcohol. The king concluded that would be a miserable life for Russians, who loved to drink. He rejected Judaism, too, because he thought that if they had God's support, their holy city Jerusalem would have been under their occupation.

The remaining choice was Christianity, but next Vladimir had to decide which denomination to follow. The men he sent to Germany reported that the churches there were not as glorious as they expected and they could not find any beauty in them. However, they found exactly what they wanted in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. After attending Sunday Mass, they reported to Vladimir they "no longer knew whether they were in heaven or on Earth... nor such beauty, and we know not how to tell of it". As a result, Vladimir chose to convert to the Byzantine form of Christianity.



Vladimir the Great from St. Petersburg

Another Byzantine medical breakthrough was the separation of conjoined twins in Constantinople in the 10th Century. This story is reproduced in many chronicles of the period. When one of the conjoined twins died, some surgeons in Constantinople attempted to remove the body of the dead twin. The surgery was partially successful, as the second twin survived the procedure, but died three days later. Even though he died, the result was so unexpected and spectacular that it was discussed by historians as a huge achievement for the next two centuries. This medical breakthrough was only repeated seven centuries later, in Germany, in a modern medical environment.

One of the distinctive characteristics of the Byzantines was their reluctance to wage wars. This statement sounds strange given the multiple campaigns against the Arabs and other enemies of the empire. But these were usually not done for mere glory. The eminent historian Sir Steven Runciman noticed that "ever since our rough crusading forefathers first saw Constantinople and met, to their contemptuous disgust, a society where everyone read and wrote, ate food with forks and preferred diplomacy to war, it has been fashionable to pass the Byzantines by with scorn and to use their name as synonymous

with decadence". In the West, there was a deep belief that the Byzantines were not warlike people. However, despite their resistance to warfare, they invented fierce weapons to counter their enemies. One of the most famous was the Greek Fire, an incendiary similar to napalm. Its exact composition remains a mystery for historians to solve. This fearful weapon was shot from tubes and siphons, until the Byzantines realised that they could also put it in containers and throw it. You could

Justinian's *Corpus Iuris Civilis* simplified the law by consolidating all rulings in one code. Any excluded edict was considered repealed

say that is how the first grenade was invented. Grenades are still being used in modern warfare today, but the first one was created by the Byzantines and it resembled the contemporary Molotov cocktail. It was shot either by hand or with the help of tubular projectors. Indeed, for an empire that despised war, it had in its possession the secret to one of the deadliest weapons of the age. Only centuries later would other empires start using their own versions of the Greek fire, which was reportedly not as effective.

Modern law has its origins in the Eastern Roman Empire, and it is greatly indebted to one specific legal collection, the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*. In 528AD, Justinian ordered the compilation of one Codex that would cut the length of litigation and reduce the complexity of the existing legal texts. This Code would act as the safeguard of the state, and



The Monastery of St. Dionysios in Mount Athos



The crown of Constantine Monomachos

© Wiki

“Justinian’s Code formed the basis for one of the most important legal reforms of modern history – the Napoleonic Code”

it would be a “single authoritative recompilation” under Justinian’s name, thus it would render his legacy eternal and his authority absolute. His legacy was indeed to be eternal, as this Code set the foundations for modern European legal systems.

The majority of Western European countries have heavily drawn on Justinian’s legislation, which has been reworked and transformed in order to fit the modern standards of justice. The *Corpus Iuris Civilis* was disseminated in Italy towards the end of the 11th Century and was taught in the University of Bologna, the first European University. Later, in the 16th Century, the Code was published in Paris in two lengthy volumes and formed the basis for one of the most important legal reforms of modern history – the Napoleonic Code established in 1804 shortly after the French Revolution.

During the 19th and 20th Century, the Code was translated into other European languages, such as English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. Its authority and influence is undeniable, and it comes mainly from the fact that Justinian’s legislation was viewed by the majority of European states as a way to create a moral and equal society, and to improve the relationship between monarchs and their subjects.

However, the Byzantine legacy and influence goes beyond medical or military inventions and scholarly achievements. Their symbols were adopted by other empires, modern countries and even sports clubs. The famous double-headed eagle is the main example. Adopted by Byzantium, it later became the symbol of imperial authority of the Habsburg monarchs. Many Balkan countries

have the double-headed eagle on their flags, such as Albania and Serbia. Montenegro changed its flag in 2004, re-adding the symbol that had been its coat of arms before. Russia adopted it to strengthen its claims of succession to the Byzantine Empire after the latter’s fall. The Greek Orthodox Church is another example of adoption of the symbol, which proves how strong Byzantine symbolism can be, especially when it fits modern political agendas.

After the fall of Constantinople, many empires and institutions attempted to claim succession and legitimise themselves. The medieval roots of a number of fledgling countries were highlighted in the 19th Century, when the emerging Balkan countries were struggling for independence. The desire to claim the glitz and glamour of the Byzantine era led Simeon I of Bulgaria (893-927) to adopt the title “Tsar of Bulgarians and Emperor of Romans”. Stefan Dušan (1331-1355), the first king of the Serbian Empire, used the title “Emperor of the Serbs and Greeks and Bulgarians”. In fact, Dušan was so obsessed with the title that in his legal code he claimed direct lineage to Constantine the Great, the first Eastern Roman emperor.

But the double-headed eagle serves another purpose apart from being used as a symbol of



The Imperial Crown of the Holy Roman Emperor

political legitimisation. It has been adopted across Europe as a sports clubs insignia. Some examples include the Dutch football club SBV Vitesse, English club AFC Wimbledon and Scotland's St. Johnstone FC. In Turkey and Greece, there are more teams with the symbol – the most famous Turkish club being Konyaspor, who play in the Süper Lig, Turkey's best league, while Greek clubs PAOK and AEK also use the double-headed eagle.

In the West, evident Byzantine influence includes the protocol followed by the royal dynasty of the Habsburgs and the states they ruled. The Imperial Crown of the Holy Roman Empire was used by the Holy Roman Emperors from late 11th

“The German people were astounded by Theophano's fork – the traditional way of eating was with dagger and hands”

Century to the dissolution of the empire in 1806. The crown has green and blue precious stones, which were used by the Byzantine emperors following the imperial protocol. Depictions of the Holy Roman Emperors changed from profile to

portrait, in order to resemble the Byzantine art style. Similarly, western emperors appear kneeling in front of Jesus, the Virgin Mary and other Christian figures in Gospels. In the Golden Gospels of Henry III, Henry and his wife Agnes receive



Portrait of Manuel Chrysoloras, who played a key role in introducing Greek texts to Western Europe in the Middle Ages

What did the Byzantines do for us?

blessings from the Virgin Mary with the Speyer Cathedral on the background.

Through marriages with Byzantine princesses, the Western kingdoms came in closer touch with the Byzantine culture and traditions. At the same time, it confirmed the huge cultural gap between the two neighbouring worlds. The emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Otto I, had asked for a Byzantine princess to be married to his son Otto II, in order to sign a treaty between the two empires. In 972, the Byzantine emperor John Tzimiskes agreed to send his niece Theophano to Otto, which was considered a huge diplomatic success for the Western world. In their minds, Byzantium was the very cornerstone of sophistication and prestige. As such, her arrival was glorious - she had an exceptional escort and brought an invaluable treasure from Constantinople.

Interestingly, Theophano introduced the fork to the Holy Roman Empire, because the Germans wondered what she was using when they saw her eating. As contemporary chronicles recite, the local people were astounded when she "used a golden double prong to bring food to her mouth" as the traditional German way of eating was with dagger and hands.

Apart from her peculiar way of eating food, Theophano had other habits rendering her unlikeable to Western European people. The Byzantine princess wanted to bathe daily, was dressed in silks and luxurious jewellery, plus she was considered chatty - a behaviour that Germanic people did not approve of. Her son Otto III, who reigned from 996 to 1002, loved Greek and Roman cultures because of his mother's influence. Towards the end of his short life, he started to despise his German subjects whom he perceived as uncivilised and unworthy. Otto showed his love and respect

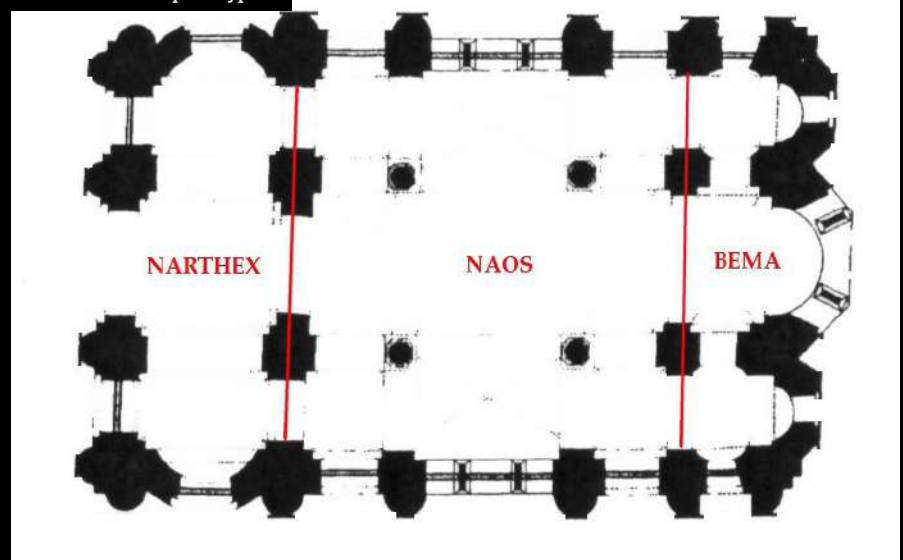
New architectural developments

The Byzantine legacy in architecture and how it is still used for churches and even mosques

The Byzantines developed many new styles of architecture. One of the most important innovations was that of the pendentive dome. Even though it had existed since the Roman times, the first fully developed example survives from the reconstruction of Hagia Sophia in 563. In 558, an earthquake caused the dome to collapse, so five years later the pendentive dome was formed as a solution to the problem of the weight of the enormous dome.

This innovative approach allowed the circular dome to be built on top of a rectangular floor plan. During the Middle Byzantine period, churches evolved from the traditional basilica to the type known as cross in square. The name derives from the shape of the inner divisions, which form a cross. In the western part of the church is the narthex, the entrance to the main part of the edifice, while the eastern part is the sanctuary, separated from the rest of the church by an iconostasis. The design proved so impressive that it was imitated by a plethora of Turkish mosques in the centuries that followed the fall of Constantinople, and it remains in use today.

The Byzantine church of Myrelaion in Constantinople, built in cross in square type





Harald Hardrada

A Norwegian king in the Byzantine military elite

Byzantium was open to foreigners, and allowed them to ascend the societal ladder so long as they were worthy. Such a case is Harald Hardrada, the Norwegian king from 1046 to 1066. However, before ascending to the throne of his kingdom he had been a military commander of the Varangian Guard in the Byzantine Empire. The Varangian was a military unit comprising mainly people from England and Scandinavia.

Hardrada, after an unsuccessful attempt to claim the Norwegian throne in 1030, was exiled to Kiev – but his desire for glory led him to Constantinople with 500 loyal soldiers. He was sent by the Byzantine emperor on a plethora of expeditions across Asia Minor and – according to the chronicles – he managed to capture 80 Arab strongholds. Afterwards, he was sent to Italy where he freed many cities, but did not succeed because of an uprising of Normans and Lombards.

Harald was recalled to Constantinople and was later imprisoned by the new emperor, but managed to escape. Then, due to the tense political situation, he fled from Constantinople. In 1046 he returned to his motherland where he became king. He had two unsuccessful attempts at taking the Danish and the English thrones. During his expedition in England in 1066, he underestimated the English army and he and his soldiers got obliterated in the battle of Stamford Bridge. According to one chronicle, the brave Viking marched forward, killing a plethora of enemies before being hit by an arrow in his throat. The adventurous life of Harald, along with the Viking Age, was destined to end in Yorkshire.



Harald Hardrada in the Kirkwall Cathedral

The recipe for Greek Fire, an early modern flamethrower, was a closely guarded secret for centuries

for the Byzantine protocol, which he adopted for his own court. At the same time, he wanted to get married to a Byzantine princess and asked for Greek monks from southern Italy to build monasteries in Germany. The Byzantine influence was gradually increased through imported icons, ivories, jewels and other artworks. A Byzantine monk named Theophilos also wrote a treatise on the art of processing gold, which German goldsmiths used to improve their technique. Another Greek abbot, who later became Pope John XVI, translated the medical treatise of *Celsus* for Otto. After the death of Otto, the Byzantine influence remained prominent in the German court.

In Eastern Europe, one of the greatest Byzantine influences was the dissemination of Christian Orthodoxy to the Slavs. The introduction of Orthodoxy in the Balkans took place in 864, and the Bulgarians were the recipients. The Serbs were the next to join the religion, and today there are

seven Slavic states with an Orthodox majority. They all follow the Byzantine Rite, developed in Constantinople. The Rite does not dictate only the way the liturgy is celebrated, but also the church's architecture, vestments, icons, fasting and more aspects of the church life for devout Orthodox Christians. Orthodox fasting is stricter than the Roman Catholic version. Orthodox Christians abstain not only from meat but also from dairy products and on certain days, such as Good Friday, they also avoid oil, fish and wine.

Also, every Wednesday and Friday is considered a fasting day, with monasteries adding Monday to the list for good measure.

The Orthodox nations also adopted the Byzantine style of monasticism, the main difference between the Western and the Byzantine ways being that the latter does not have religious orders and is primarily based on mysticism. Furthermore, Eastern monasticism has its own set of rules. Today, Mount Athos – an

Around 200 million people follow the Orthodox religion today. Its name comes from the Greek for right ('orthós') belief ('dóxa')

What did the Byzantines do for us?

autonomous monastic region in Greece - is the living continuation of Byzantine monasticism and it accepts visitors who can experience and participate in the daily life of monks. Female presence within Mount Athos, however, is strictly forbidden. Women can only admire the beauty of the monastic lands by boat. For the Orthodox world, the Athos community is known as the Holy Mountain and is considered one of the most important and pious monastic centres in the world.

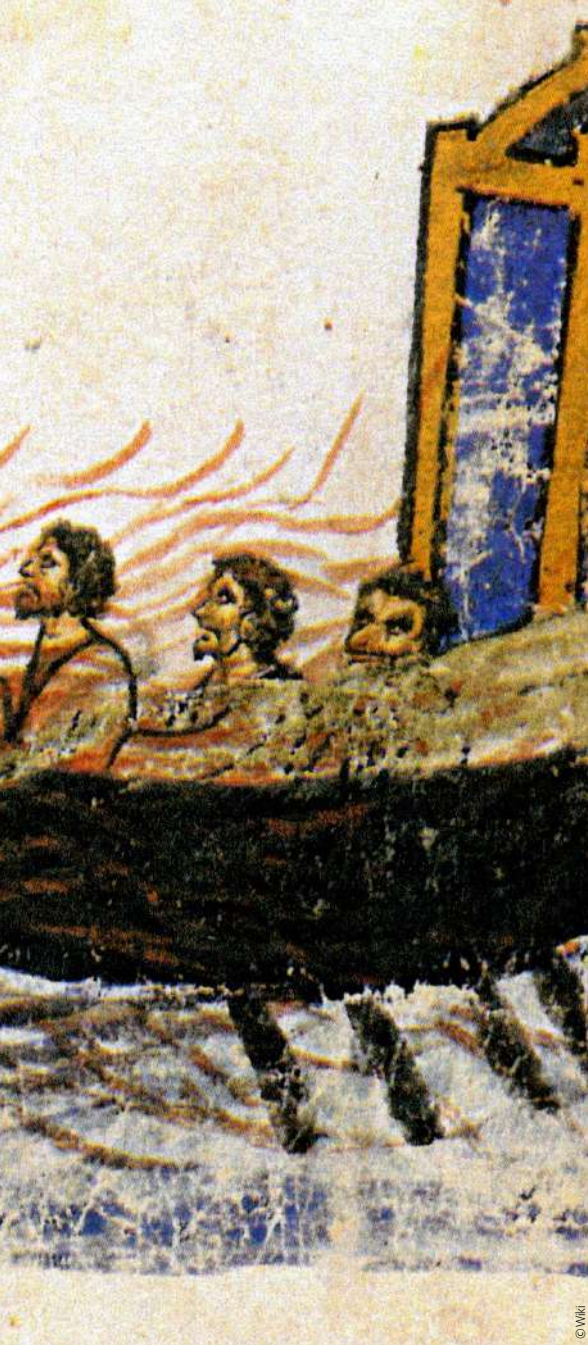
A Byzantine invention that can be found in most contemporary Eastern Orthodox Churches is the iconostasis. Icons were invented in the Eastern Roman Empire, and they depict holy figures. The iconostasis is a wall-bearing icon, and exists to separate the sanctuary from the nave. Icons are usually made from wood and the techniques used are tempera or encaustic. There are also icons made from metal and ivory, with precious stones to highlight the characteristics of the depicted figures. A visitor to an Orthodox church has the opportunity to take a glimpse of a Byzantine church and - with help from their imagination - they can experience the mystical and fascinating world of the Eastern Roman Empire.

Apart from religion, in the East, the Byzantine Empire was influential in another aspect of daily life - the written word. In 863, two Byzantine missionaries from Thessaloniki, Cyril and Methodius, were sent by Emperor Michael III and Patriarch Photius to Great Moravia, an early Slavic state, to teach them about Christianity, the

aim being to convert it into a Christian state that would act as a Byzantine satellite. The two brothers invented the first Slavic alphabet and translated the Bible and other patristic works in order to increase their chances of success. The new alphabet was named Glagolitic and it had 41 characters to match the sounds of the Slavic dialects. Twenty-four of the letters derive from the small Greek alphabet characters, the rest adopted from other languages used for Christian liturgies, such as Coptic and Armenian. The use of the Glagolitic alphabet stopped soon after its creation and was replaced by the Cyrillic alphabet, which was created by the first disciples of the two missionaries and is still in use today in most Slavic countries, such as Russia, and recently became the third official script of the European Union after Latin and Greek. Unintentionally, the two Byzantine brothers played a major role in promoting multilingualism and diversity in Europe. For their contribution to the Slavs, Cyril and Methodius were canonised and are still celebrated throughout the Balkans.

The Byzantine Empire spent 11 centuries disseminating Greek and Roman culture. After the fall of Constantinople, that Byzantine influence remained, through both its contribution to the Italian Renaissance and the many inventions and innovations. The empire will always be remembered through the small daily things we use that originated there, and through the other major aspects of life, such as law, which have been heavily influenced by the Eastern Roman Empire.

“The Cyrillic alphabet is still in use today in most Slavic countries, such as Russia, and is the third official script of the EU”



© Wiki



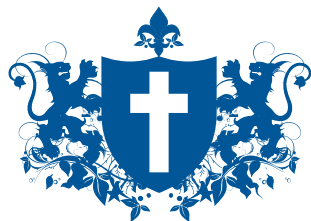
A Byzantine Icon of the Annunciation from the 14th Century

© Wiki



Flag of Montenegro with the double-headed eagle

© Wiki



RISE OF THE HOLY EMPIRE

The dominant institution in the lives of kings and peasants alike, the Church promised heavenly salvation to all yet frequently delivered earthly schism



For the majority of the population in western Europe, life in Medieval times was unrelentingly grim and frequently short. Death was a constant shadow; if poverty, famine or pestilence didn't carry you off, there were plenty of warmongering emperors and kings looking for battlefield expendables. Yet one organisation offered some semblance of reassurance that everything was not forlorn or futile - the Church.

Its message was simple: no matter how horrible a life was on Earth, if the person living it followed the teachings of Christ, a heavenly reward was assured. Conversely, living a sinful, wicked life meant being cast down into hell for eternity. The hope of salvation or the expectation of damnation gave the church considerable power over the hearts and minds of people. It dominated the lives of rich and poor alike, essentially from cradle to grave, in that baptism, worship, marriage, and burial after death most usually took place either in holy establishments or on hallowed grounds.

The Church was one of the few outlets for education too. There weren't many people in the Middle Ages who were able to read and write. Those that could were often priests, monks in monasteries or nuns in convents, who naturally taught from their own religious texts, perpetuating those beliefs.

To be a Christian in western Europe in those times was to be a Catholic as, unlike today, it was the only religion of the period that believed in the risen Christ. As the conversion of pagans to Christianity spread across Europe through the early centuries, so the Church grew in numbers and influence. It acquired lands, developed its own laws and collected taxes. Its centre was Rome at the heart of the Western Roman Empire, while at its head was the pope, believed to be a successor of Saint Peter, the founder of the Catholic Church.

Other important early outposts were at Constantinople, Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria, all in the Eastern Roman Empire, which was also known as the Byzantine Empire. While this contracted or expanded over the centuries, remaining relatively intact until 1453, Rome stayed the primary centre of the Catholic Church despite the collapse of the Western Roman Empire in 476. The spread of Christianity continued apace after this date, however, even into areas that had been beyond Roman control previously. Key groups of pagans, such as the Franks in Germany who converted en masse in 496, regularly turned to Catholicism. Some time in the second half of the 5th century, Saint Patrick landed in Ireland to introduce Christianity there. In 596, Pope Gregory I, often known as Saint Gregory the Great, sent a mission to Britain to convert the Anglo-Saxons - pagan tribes who had invaded and settled after the Romans had left - with great success.



Roman-style churches of the Early Middle Ages were dark and gloomy. Thick, small-windowed walls were needed for roof support

Middle Ages

Yet as the area of Catholic influence and power in western Europe grew, to the extent that no king or emperor could ignore it, invasions into its sphere from hostile tribes nevertheless took place. In 772, for example, the pagan Lombards marched deep into papal territory, threatening Rome. The pope at the time, Adrian I, called for help from the king of the Franks, Charlemagne. By that time, he had expanded his territory to include modern-day France, Germany, Northern Italy and beyond. Charlemagne's army swiftly defeated the Lombards, underlining the role of the Franks as papal protectors.

Under Charlemagne, the Catholics were also ruthless in forcing conquered tribes to embrace Christianity or be put to death. At Verden, Saxons who had previously submitted to Charlemagne attempted to rebel. This act incurred biblical-level wrath from the Frankish king when he had 4,500 of them beheaded.

In 800, a subsequent pope, Leo III, called for Charlemagne's support when he was accused of being unfit for papal office. Entering Rome in December, Charlemagne backed Leo, and the plotters were exiled. In gratitude, and in acknowledgment of the leader's importance, on Christmas Day at Saint Peter's Basilica, Leo crowned Charlemagne emperor of what would later be known as the Holy Roman Empire.

At the time, this caused no small amount of resentment in the Eastern Roman Empire. There, Irene of Athens, the de facto empress of the Byzantine Empire, already had claim to that title. Yet this was just one of a number of contentious



Charlemagne And The Pope, by Antoine Verard, from 1493, when Adrian I requested military help

"The extent of papal authority greatly vexed the Eastern Roman Empire"

issues between the two regions. Matters really came to a head some 200 years later. By then, the Latin-speaking West and the Greek-speaking East contained very few individuals who could speak and write both languages. As basic communication became more difficult, cultural unity suffered too, giving rise to different approaches to religious doctrines. One such doctrine concerned the filioque clause in the Nicene Creed, and that, along with a dispute over the extent of papal authority, were the two principle reasons for the event known as the Great Schism of 1054.

The Nicene Creed is the statement of faith made by Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and other Christian churches. It was named after the First Council of Nicaea, held in 325, when the statement was formulated. Its wording was revised after the First Council of Constantinople in 381. The third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus in 431 reaffirmed the Creed in its second format, but specifically forbade making any further alterations to it.

However, after the Synod of Toledo in Spain in 589, Western churches included the filioque

clause, which translated from Latin means 'and the son', to a section of the Creed. The amended section now stated, "We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son." Eastern churches were categorically opposed to that inclusion.

The extent of papal authority also greatly vexed the Eastern Roman Empire. They accepted that the head of the Roman Church, the pope, had primacy over the other four early Church outposts in the east, but maintained this was at an honorary level only, and that he had no direct authority over them, or their congregations.

Ultimately, centuries of dispute and rancour fuelled by political jealousies and vested interests came to a head in 1054. Mutual excommunications served by the pope, Leo IX, and the head of the Church in Constantinople, Michael Cerularius, led to a formal split. The Roman Catholic Church became separate from the Eastern Orthodox Church along doctrinal, theological, linguistic, political and geographical lines.

Several attempts at reconciliation were made, but during the Fourth Crusade in 1204, Constantinople was attacked by Western Crusaders. The Church

Monasteries and convents - as nuns took the same vows as monks - offered health services, taking care of the sick

DEFINING MOMENT

The venerable Bede 735

The death of Saint Bede brings to an end the life of an important 8th-century scholar and writer. A Benedictine monk, his works include books on science, religion and history. Bede's *Ecclesiastical History Of The English People* will become one of the foremost primary sources of English history. Chronicler monks like Bede allow monasteries in the Middle Ages to become centres of learning. There, libraries of painstakingly hand-written volumes - with book printing being more than 500 years away - are assembled. Without such endeavour by people such as Bede, we would know far less about the history of the period.

DEFINING MOMENT

Murder most foul 1170

A group of knights brutally slay the archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket, at the altar of Canterbury Cathedral. King Henry II is suspected of inciting the murder even though Becket was formerly his friend. The monarch had previously appointed him chancellor, and as archbishop as well; he hoped Becket would keep the church in check. Yet the 'turbulent priest' put God before king and refused to implement Henry's religious reforms. The clash between church and state brings about Becket's death. Later, Henry is penitent, while reports of miracles at the victim's tomb are spread, and pilgrimages to it begin, leading to Becket's sainthood.

Timeline

The Medieval Church

496

A key conversion

Clovis I, the first king of the Franks to unite the Frankish tribes under one ruler, converts to Christianity, allowing for widespread conversions among his people.

597

Holy mission

Sent by Pope Gregory I, St Augustine leads a party of about 30 monks to England and becomes the first archbishop of Canterbury after founding the English Catholic Church.



1008

Converting a continent

Sweden's king converts to Christianity and his people follow. After Russia converts in 988, Poland in 966, Denmark in 960 and Bulgaria in 846, much of Europe is now Christian.

1054

Christianity torn asunder

Leo IX's death in April doesn't stop his deposition, carrying a papal bull of excommunication, travelling to Constantinople. Meetings with patriarch Michael Cerularius fail, the bull is severed - Rome and Constantinople irrevocably divide.



1099

To The Holy Land

The First Crusade captures Jerusalem. Briefly a Christian kingdom is founded upon it, but Jerusalem is retaken by Saladin in 1187 and the last Crusader stronghold, Acre, is lost in 1291.



An anonymous depiction of Pope Martin V. His election ended the Great Papal Schism

of the Holy Wisdom there was looted, while it and other churches were converted to Roman Catholic worship. The assault struck at the heart of the Byzantine Empire, deepening the rift between East and West. Each side claims to be "the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church," and the schism remains in place today.

Another crisis, often confusingly also referred to as a Great Schism, began in 1378. More accurately it was a Great Papal Schism, and occurred after Pope Clement V moved his court to Avignon in 1309. Previous popes had clashed with Philip IV, the increasingly influential King of France, and when Clement, a Frenchman, took office, he refused to move to Rome. Subsequent popes, all French, remained in Avignon until Pope Gregory XI took the decision to return his court to Rome in 1377. However, he died barely a year later, with a number of his cardinals still resident in Avignon.

DEFINING MOMENT

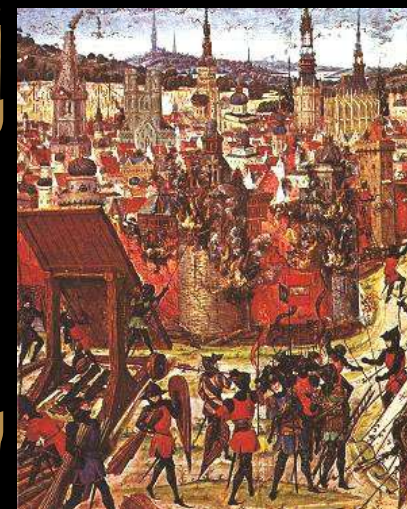
The pre-eminent pope 1198

Innocent III takes office and faces numerous crises, yet he handles each of them shrewdly, leading many to argue he is the most important pope of the Middle Ages. In his dealings with the Papal States, and with the crowned heads of Europe, he raises his position's power and authority to its height. Angered when the Fourth Crusade diverts to sack Constantinople, moving to excommunicate those responsible, he is nevertheless unable to undo the harm it causes to East-West relations. In his later years he presides over the important Fourth Lateral Council, which introduces far-reaching reforms to practices within the church.

Many in Rome feared Gregory's successor would be a Frenchman who would take the papacy back to Avignon. A confused, discordant conclave finally chose an Italian, Urban VI, as the new pope. Yet he quickly lambasted the cardinals for their behaviour and attitudes to the extent that some believed, corrupted by power, he was unfit for office. With French cardinals needing little enough excuse to rebel, they declared Urban's election invalid. Instead they voted for one of their number, Clement VII. He took up office in Avignon while Urban stayed in power in Rome. Clement naturally had the support of France, Castile in Spain, and Scotland. Predictably perhaps, France's old enemy England sided with Urban, along with much of the German empire. Christendom was divided yet again.

Upon the death of the incumbents, new popes were elected to both seats of power. The situation got messier when, in 1410, a Church Council Of Pisa, assembled to find a solution, instead elected a third line of popes beginning with Alexander V.

It was not until the Council Of Constance, from 1414-18 that a solution was finally thrashed out. The council was summoned by Alexander's successor, John XXIII, and at it, he himself was dismissed. The final Avignon pope, Benedict XIII was also dismissed, while Rome's Gregory XII resigned. The council then elected Martin V to be the sole pope going forward. There was to be but a short respite from schism in the Church. Barely 100 years later, the radical priest Martin Luther set in motion the Protestant Reformation.



The Crusades

Despite the recent East-West schism in Christianity, the leader of the Byzantine Empire, Alexius I, requested help from Pope Urban II in resisting Muslim incursions into his territory. Urban decided to do more than 'help'; in 1095, he ordered a large invasion force to not simply defend the Byzantine Empire, but to recapture Jerusalem and the Holy Lands from what he saw as Muslim occupiers. The Crusades had begun.

Definitions vary, but generally there are considered to have been nine major Crusades fought between 1096 and 1291, in addition to an unnumbered series of smaller ones. Ultimately, they all failed. The first, instigated as a Christian war by Urban, who proclaimed it offered full penance for those taking part, may also have been an attempt by him to heal the divisions of the recent schism. However, subsequent crusades aggressively attacked other religions besides Muslims. Even fellow Christians fell to Crusader swords when Constantinople was attacked in the fourth endeavour. As they descended further into indiscriminate slaughter of innocents, the papacy lost moral authority and European Christendom unity suffered.

Nevertheless, contact with the advanced Muslim culture of the time delivered advances in science, mathematics, medicine, philosophy and art to the West.

1210

A new order

The Franciscan Friars are founded by Saint Francis, a rich man who gave his fortune away to live a holy life. The order forsakes monasteries, taking God's word out to the people.

1260

As it was then...

Mostly constructed in the preceding 65 years, the Chartres Cathedral is consecrated. The magnificent structure, largely unchanged since consecration, is one of the finest examples of French Gothic architecture.

1309

All roads lead to Avignon

The reign of the Avignon-based popes begins. Sometimes called the 'Babylon Captivity of Popes', it leads to the Great Papal Schism, which is not resolved until Martin V's ordination in 1417.

1455

Spreading God's word

Employing a system of moveable metal type arranged in words and lines, Johannes Gutenberg prints copies of the Bible. Printed in Latin, it is the first book to be mass-produced in the Western world.

1498

Upheaval ahead

Italian friar Savonarola is put to death after heavily criticising the Church for laxity and luxury, yet others, such as Martin Luther, are also set to challenge Catholicism as never before in the tumultuous times ahead.



© Getty

Later tradition states that Gildas emigrated to Brittany and founded a monastery there, known as Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys





ORIGINS OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS

Where did the Anglo-Saxons come from and how many of them were there in the first place?



In the 6th century, a British cleric named Gildas wrote, in elegant Latin, a jeremiad against the corrupt and decadent rulers of his people who, through their sins, had called God's vengeance down upon them and their realms. That vengeance took the form of blond-haired, moustachioed warriors. The book Gildas wrote was called *De Excidio Britanniae (On the Ruin of Britain)* and it's the only contemporary source we have for what was happening in Britain in the two centuries after the Romans left in 410 CE.

Those blond warriors were Angles and Saxons - Germanic-speaking peoples who came from the flat, marshy regions of what are today northern Germany and southern Denmark. According to Gildas, they had been invited to the country as mercenaries and then had turned on their employer, a king named Vortigern in some manuscripts, and started carving out kingdoms of their own, driving out the native Britons and displacing them with their own people who came over the grey whale road that crossed the storm-tossed waters of the North Sea.

The story of the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons was elaborated in later accounts. The leaders of the original band of mercenaries were named as the brothers Hengist and Horsa, who landed with their men at Ebbsfleet on the Isle of Thanet. There is archaeological evidence for a Germanic presence in Kent in the early 5th century from burials where the body was wearing the sort of things on the belt that was typical of Germans in the service of Rome. According to the accounts in Bede and the

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the German mercenaries were first recruited to fight the Picts - there had been a number of Pictish incursions into Roman-ruled Britain even in the days of the empire - but when they had fulfilled that commission, and seeing that the land they'd come to was rich, they sent back word to their native lands, calling for reinforcements. The country, the brothers said, was ripe for the taking.

In 455 CE, the brothers battled with Vortigern. Horsa died as a result, but Vortigern was defeated and Hengist established himself as the first king of Kent. Later chroniclers embellished the story, telling how Vortigern became infatuated with Hengist's daughter and how the girl, working with her father, manipulated Vortigern into giving Hengist and his men more territory in return for her hand in marriage. Thus Britain was lost to the Britons through the lust of one man.

For Gildas, the coming of the Saxons was an unmitigated disaster, though one consequent upon the actions of the tyrants against whom he railed in his book. But if his account gives little detail as to what was actually happening in Britain at the time - there are no dates and only a handful of names - the account itself tells us a lot about what was still possible in Britain around 540, over a century after the Romans had left. It tells us that Britons could still benefit from a classical education, learning Latin and its associated literary culture. Gildas was a learned and cultured man, a civilised one in the fullest sense of the term, and for him the Anglo-Saxons were nothing but barbarians: pagan illiterates whose only use for a book was to turn it into kindling.



Excavated Anglo-Saxon weapons: spears, the most common, a sword and, in the bottom left, a shield boss



Was Arthur really a friend to the English, or a champion of the Britons?

The once and future king

The legendary Arthur actually fought against the English

The legendary image of Arthur, the once and future king, who will return in England's direst need to heroically fight against any enemies, is somewhat undercut by the fact that, if he existed at all, Arthur actually fought against the English as a champion of the native Britons, the people who would become the Welsh.

But Arthur's very existence is a moot point. The earliest definite reference to him is in the *Historia Brittonum* (*History of the Britons*), which was written in Wales around 830, so at least three centuries after when he was supposed to have lived. In the *Historia*, Arthur is the *dux bellorum* (duke of battles) rather than a king, who leads the Britons to 12 victories over the Anglo-Saxons, the last being at Mount Badon. This is interesting because Gildas also talks about a victory for the Britons at Mount Badon, the battle taking place in the year of his birth, as well as naming the man who rallied the Britons after the shock of the initial Saxon invasion.

Unfortunately for Arthurian apologists, Gildas names this war leader as Ambrosius Aurelianus, rather than Arthur. That the Britons had war leaders who rallied them against the invaders seems certain: whether the greatest of these was really called Arthur, we simply cannot say.

The conquest of Britain was conducted in slow-motion. It took centuries, with the fortunes of both sides fluctuating hugely for the first two centuries, but in the end the Anglo-Saxons prevailed. The Britons became the Welsh - a word derived from 'wealh' in the Saxon language we now call Old English, meaning 'foreigner' but with a telling secondary meaning of 'slave' - and the Germans became the English, while further north the Picts were Scottish, while the Scots were still living in Ireland. Into those lost centuries, the Britons placed the tales of a hero, Arthur, who turned back the Anglo-Saxon tide for a while.

But was it really a conquest? With no other sources available, scholars accepted the view of someone who lived through the *Adventus Saxonum*, accepting it as indeed a mass movement of peoples from the regions where the Rhine flows to the sea to Britain. But in the later decades of the 20th century, a new generation of scholars began to question this picture. Archaeological analysis of historic tree pollen records indicated that there had been very little change in tree-cover levels during this period, where whole regions were supposedly depopulated, the native Britons fleeing before the advancing Anglo-Saxons (some fled overseas, founding a new kingdom in what came to be called Brittany in France). But if farmers had fled, then productive land should have turned to scrub, wood and even forest if left untended long enough. However, there was no evidence for these changes in the pollen record: the land seemed to have stayed under the same levels of cultivation throughout this period.

So maybe the farmers stayed put throughout, ploughing and sowing and reaping, while around them bands of warriors fought their little wars, one elite - pagan and Anglo-Saxon - displacing another - Christian and Briton. But the new Anglo-Saxon elite, by virtue of the possession of arms and their place at the top of the social hierarchy, slowly imposed their language and culture on the peasant farmers who remained, farming the land as they had always done. By this view, rather than there being a massive replacement of peoples, the Anglo-Saxons arrived as war bands, removed the native warrior elite, and installed themselves at the top of the social tree, taking wives among the Britons but ensuring that their language and culture predominated in the areas that they controlled.

Some historians, however, caviled at this interpretation of the evidence. In particular, the

THE ARRIVALL OF THE FIRST Ancestors of English-men out of Germany into Brittaine.



Fig. 8.—The landing of Hengist and Horsa in Kent. "And because these noble gentlemen were the very first bringers, and conductors of the ancestors of English-men into Brittain: . . . I thought fit here in our treatise to see down their first descent: shewing in these figures which spread in the intelligence in

Hengist and Horsa arriving in Britain with their band of Anglo-Saxon mercenaries

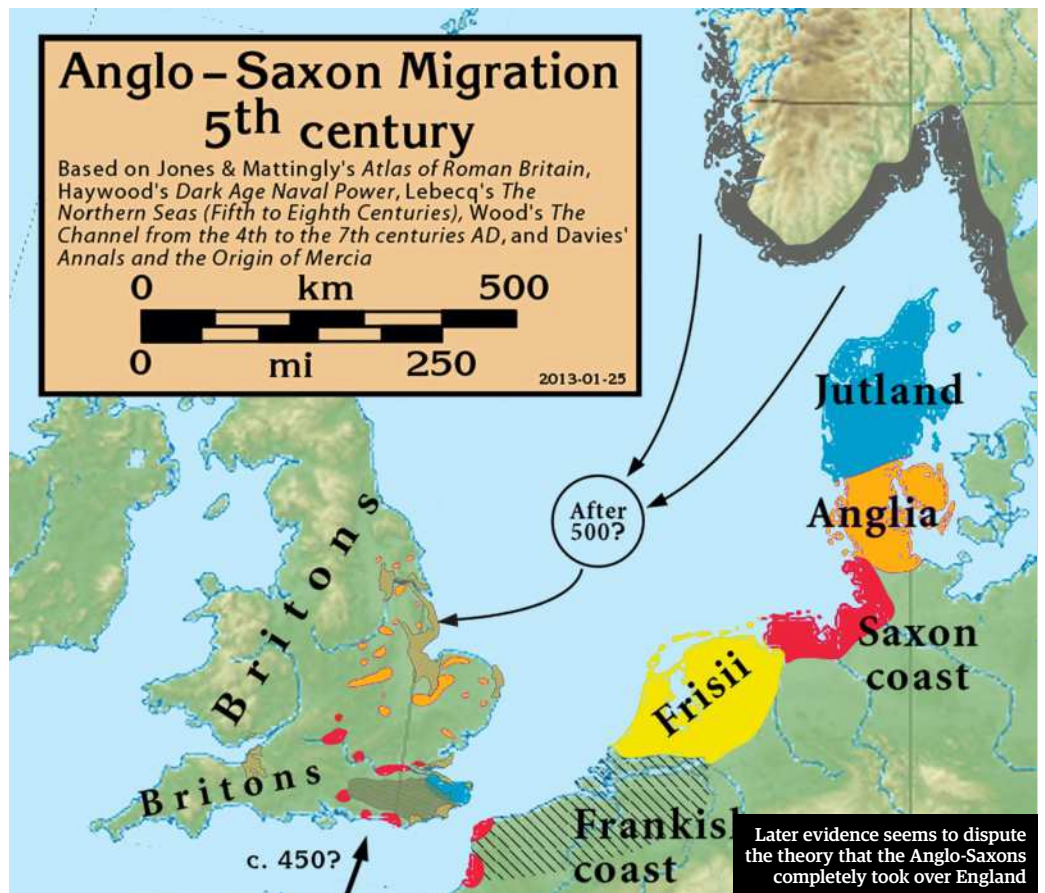


Later romances named Hengist's daughter Rowena and greatly elaborated the story of her seduction of King Vortigern

"The German people were astounded by 'The conquest of Britain was conducted in slow-motion'"

specialists in place names pointed out that there are few place names in England that derive from the Celtic - the vast majority have their origin in Old English. But if a native, Brittonic peasantry had remained working the land for a new set of Anglo-Saxon masters, then we would expect there to be many more names of Celtic origin, for the simple reason that the new lord of the manor would ask his peasants, 'Hey, that copse over there, what's it called?' Hearing the answer, he'd then tell his compliant peasants, 'Go chop down some trees from 'coedlan.' A new lord would use the names in place to order his peasants around rather than inventing a whole new set of names for the simple reason that his peasants would know what he wanted them to do.

So, did the Anglo-Saxons arrive en masse, conduct a programme of ethnic cleansing and occupy the land that would come to be known as England, or was it a case of a top-level takeover that gradually imposed its language and culture on the lower levels of society? The evidence was inconclusive and scholars were divided. Some other way of answering the question was necessary. Then along came DNA testing. Surely that would provide the answer? There have been



many studies attempting to establish the ethnic origins of the peoples of Britain but unfortunately the first wave of studies provided such wildly contradictory answers that no one was any the wiser. It turns out that genetic analysis for origins is a hugely complex business that also requires large and robust sample sizes. However, further studies that take account of these difficulties seem to be gradually moving towards some likely conclusions. Firstly, that there is a very strong regional basis to genetic identity in Britain: the Cornish are different even from the Devonians, let alone with respect to the rest of the

country, as are the north Welsh from the south Welsh, the Scots and the Cumbrians. The native population of Britain derives from the settlers who first arrived as the Ice Age was waning and it was still possible to walk to Britain, before the land bridge was cut around 6500 BCE. But over that foundation population, the only significant influx of peoples, localised in the south and centre

of England, has their roots in the Jutland peninsula and northern Saxony, the traditional homelands of the Anglo-Saxons. Assuming that in the 5th century the population of what became England was about one million, then somewhere between 250,000 and 400,000 came from abroad. So it seems that the answer as to the origins of the English lies somewhere between the two opposing views: the native inhabitants were not completely

pushed out, but this was not just an elite takeover. In comparison, the Normans have left very little genetic footprint on the peoples of Britain: the Conquest really was an elite takeover.

The most recent archaeological work backs up this genetic analysis, with evidence of Anglo-Saxon and Brittonic settlements continuing near to each other, but there being an almost apartheid-like separation between the two communities in the first generations. However, the barriers did slowly start to come down until eventually, after a couple of centuries, they merge.

The phrase 'Anglo-Saxon' didn't actually come into use in Europe until the 8th century



Vortigern making his fateful treaty with Hengist and Horsa

The advent of feudalism

Discover how to rule a united land of loyal followers



When William the Conqueror successfully invaded England and became king in 1066 he completely changed the way the country was run. Before William was crowned the land was divided between earls who were free to govern in whatever way they saw fit, which could result in tyrannical rules and piecemeal laws. Instead, William allocated each section of land to tenants-in-chief known as barons. The baron was still subservient to the king and had to provide him with money and knights when needed. If he was unable to provide these, he would be removed from his position. The system handed more control to the monarch, but keeping so many ambitious and wealthy men in check was a difficult and time-consuming task that could mean the difference between a mighty united nation and a disjointed land ripe for the picking...

5 TYPES OF ROYAL TITLES

Duke/Duchess

The highest-ranking peers of the king, they also served as peers of the realm. The first dukes were instituted by Edward III.

Marquess/Marchioness

The marquesses are below the dukes in title, and owned land on the border of the country they were trusted with defending.

Earl

Earls had authority over a region and collected fines and taxes. They were also responsible for leading the king's armies in war.

Viscount/Vicountess

Viscounts would assist with the running of provinces and were heavily involved with administering the courts.

Knight

Knights were a rung below barons, but were still part of the nobility. They were expected to adhere to a code of chivalry.

ARRANGING A FEUDAL MARRIAGE

Politics not love

If a baron died and left an unmarried heir, the king could sell the heir in marriage for the price of his estates. Daughters and widows could also be sold in marriage, and the king would arrange the marriage of all female heirs.

Bride

The female daughter of a baron had no say in her marriage and could be married as young as 12 years old. Once married, she was not allowed to divorce her husband.

Groom

The aim of marriage was either to further wealth, land or status, or to end rivalries between families and increase political influence. The king would marry his siblings into powerful houses to increase his power.



01 Choose your barons

When William the Conqueror claimed England he picked his barons from his finest warriors. Upon a baron's death their land is passed down to their heir. To ensure their loyalty to you, all barons will need to swear an oath of loyalty before reaping the benefits. The chosen men will kneel before you at a ceremony and proclaim: "Sire, I have become your man."



02 Summon your barons to court

Barons would attend a feudal court, an early incarnation of a parliament. There is no set schedule, so you'll have to send out personal writs to all the barons you wish to appear at your council. The barons will provide advice, but it's also an opportunity for you to bring up the subject of funding; after all, ruling a kingdom is expensive.

How not to... manage your barons

When King John of England suffered a string of defeats overseas he was forced to demand more money from his barons to fund his army. In 1204 John lost his land in northern France, so in order to recover from this crushing failure he raised taxes without consulting his barons – common practice at the time. However, when John was defeated again at the Battle of Bouvines many English barons lost their possessions in Normandy. On top of this, John returned and demanded yet more money from taxes. This blatant disregard for feudal law was the final straw for the barons, who led a mass rebellion against the king, managing to capture London. By the spring of 1215 John was forced into negotiations with the barons and the end result of this was *Magna Carta* – a document that placed limitations on the king's power and protected some of the barons' rights.



4 FEUDAL REVOLTS

Rebellion of György Dózsa

1514, Kingdom of Hungary

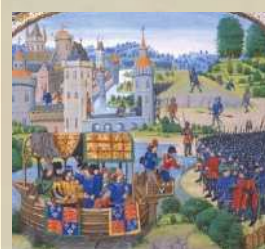
Thousands of the gentry were killed and castles burned when peasants in Hungary led a mass revolt against their overlords.



Peasants' Revolt

1381, England

Over a thousand English rebels rose up to protest taxation and unpaid labour, destroying many buildings in London and killing high-ranking officials.



Ivaylo rebellion

1277–1280, Bulgaria

The swineherd Ivaylo led an uprising against Tsar Constantine I, who was overthrown, with Ivaylo put in his place.



Flanders peasant revolt

1323–1328, Flanders

Due to a steep rise in taxes, a series of scattered rural riots broke out and slowly escalated into a five-year rebellion.



03 Send out a call for arms

As a king you're going to need an ample supply of soldiers to defend your borders and vanquish your enemies. You will have to send out requests to your barons to provide you with knights. Each baron has a different set quota of knights they must supply you with for up to 40 days at a time; make sure their equipment is up to scratch and use them wisely.



04 Collect taxes

Conquering is expensive business, so if your barons are unable to provide knights they need to pay you 'scutage' so you can hire mercenaries instead. You also need to collect the taxes your barons have amassed, as well as the baron's own rent for his land. There is also feudal relief, a one-off tax the heir of an estate pays when a baron dies.

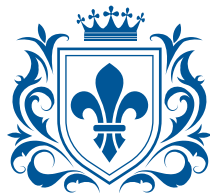


05 Enjoy free lodgings

You will need to travel around the country a lot, so it's just as well that your barons have a duty to provide free food and lodging. Kings tend to travel with quite the entourage, so this can be very costly to the barons; William's household once consumed 6,000 chickens, 1,000 rabbits, 200 geese, 90 boars, 50 peacocks and hundreds of casks of wine during a Christmas visit.

06 Maintain control

The trouble with giving people great expanses of land is that they can become powerful and sometimes rebellious, like the French and German barons who began to govern their lands as independent states. The best way to prevent this is to provide strict but fair leadership. If that fails, you can always relieve the troublemakers of their position (or their life).



CHARLEMAGNE

The 'father of Europe' and ruler of much of France and Germany, Charlemagne made his name as a king but left a legacy as the first Roman emperor since the 5th century



Over 300 years, Europe had fallen into darkness. With the power of the Pope and the once mighty Roman Church beset by enemies, the legacy of the western Roman Empire toppled as steadily and as surely as the Caesars had themselves, stability withdrawing like overstretched legionnaires and knowledge fading away like the crumbling Roman roads that cross-hatched the continent.

Europe needed a strong leader to pull it back from the precipice, and it got a brace of them in the form of the Carolingian dynasty, a family of self-made kings who stabilised their lands by force, expanded their frontiers with terrifying aggression and ensured the primacy of the Christian Church. Yet, through this crucible of violence emerged a western Europe reformed to survive another 1,000 years.

By the 6th century, most of what is now France, western Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Belgium was inhabited by the Franks, a Germanic tribe split into several small kingdoms that had rushed into the power vacuum left by Rome. These petty principalities had been united not by their monarch - the rois fainéants, the 'do-nothing kings' of the Merovingian dynasty, had been increasingly sidelined by their own ministers - but by the Mayor of the Palace, the executive of the royal administration who was half-prime minister and half-Shogun-esque warlord.

Pepin of Herstal had warred his way to stability between 680 CE and his death in 714 CE, bringing the other Frankish lands to heel and taking Christianity to their furthest and most pagan reaches. His son, Charles Martel, was a stronger hand yet. Though Pepin had nominated his grandson as successor, Charles - born out of wedlock and excluded from the court - was having none of it, and took the not-quite-throne by force. Despite not being Pepin's choice of heir, he more than honoured his father's vision, expanding the

centralised control of the Frank lands and extending his rule further into modern Holland, Denmark and Germany with a formidable standing army and revolutionary use of heavy cavalry, the foundation of Europe's knights. He defeated the pagan Saxons in the east and halted the advance of the Moors - the North African and Spanish Muslims of the powerful Umayyad Caliphate - who attempted to follow up their conquest of Spain by pushing across the Pyrenees mountains into France.

'Charles the Hammer' was even offered high office by the Pope, which he declined, but it was an auspicious omen of his grandson's own journey to come.

Succeeding his father Pepin the Short in 768 CE - who had given up the pretence of being anything other than supreme ruler by forcing the last Merovingian king into a monastery and taking the title of 'King of the Franks' - Charlemagne, which means 'Charles the Great', shared the zeal of his predecessors. At war for most of his life,


In later life, Charlemagne came into conflict with his doctors after they advised him to stop eating roasted meat







Charles Martel, grandfather of Charlemagne, defeats the Moors at the Battle of Tours in 732

Charlemagne took Charles Martel's fight against the Moors into northern Spain, continued the conquest and conversion of the Saxons and launched new campaigns against the Lombards of northern Italy, the Slavs in Croatia and the Avars in Hungary.

Leading his personal guard, the *scara* cavalry, into battle with his sword *Joyeuse*, Charlemagne's exploits have one armoured foot in myth and the other in fact, with separating the two being a difficult task, but his journey from king to the first Roman emperor since the fall of the Roman Empire has little to do with his legend as a warrior king and everything to do with the insecurity of the Church.

Pope Leo III succeeded Adrian I on the day of the previous pontiff's burial, so fearful was he that the Frankish king to whom his predecessor owed his lands and safety would feel a right to interfere in the election of the new pope. Yet, despite his wariness he was quick to bring Rome's most powerful ally on side; along with the letter

that announced his succession, Leo included the keys to St Peter's Basilica and the Pope's banner. The not-so subtle message was that he viewed Charlemagne as the defender of the Holy See, and trusted him with Rome's protection. The Frank was equally magnanimous in return, congratulating the pontiff and sending vast riches, the spoils of his war against the Avars, but not without condition, suggesting that as he happened to be the stalwart defender of Christianity, the pope had a duty to pray for the Frankish armies as they continued their conquest.

Charlemagne would honour his side of this implied bargain, and in return Leo elevated him to an office left vacant since the 5th century.

While Leo engaged in his letter-writing campaign with the monarch to the north-west and used the Avar loot to become a patron of the arts, the family of the late Adrian I launched a conspiracy to remove him from his post and replace him with his nephew Paschal the Primicerius. On 25

April 799 CE, during the procession of The Greater Litanies through the Eternal City, Leo was attacked by armed thugs who stabbed him in the eyes and attempted to tear out his tongue at the root. After dragging him to the church of San Silvestro in Capite and trying to gouge out his eyes again, the bloodied pope was left unconscious as a prisoner at the monastery of St Erasmus. Accused of perjury and fornication by his rivals, the wounded - but amazingly not blinded or voiceless - Leo fled Rome to Spoleto, 126 kilometres (78 miles) north of the city, where under the protection of the Duke of Spoleto he was able to make his way to Charlemagne at Paderborn in Saxony.

That such a loyal servant of the Frankish king could be found so close to Rome, deep within Italy's central Umbria region, neatly underlines the unbalanced relationship of power between the Franks and the Roman Catholic Church that had initially caused Leo such anxiety. Though the territory had been given to Rome in 776 after the defeat of the Lombards, the king retained the power to choose the Duke, making papal control as meaningless as that of the last Merovingian kings under Charlemagne's ancestors.

Clearly, the threat of political interference from Charlemagne had been trumped by that of actual bodily harm, and Leo begged for the monarch's aid. He had no authority to do so - neither he nor the conspirators in Rome were subjects of the Franks, and no law yet existed that would make bishops subordinate to secular authority. With conflict left in Saxony to pursue, Charlemagne let the matter stew for a year and kept the recovering pontiff as his guest. Finally heading to Rome in November 800 CE with a sizeable (and no doubt fairly threatening) entourage,



St Giles pardons the Emperor. Although a popular legend, there's no evidence that the two ever met

“Charlemagne's journey from king to emperor has everything to do with the insecurity of the Church”

Charlemagne summoned a council of the city's religious authorities and patiently listened to the accusations put to Leo, before allowing the deposed pontiff to make an impassioned plea of innocence.

Unsurprisingly, Charlemagne took Leo's side, and ordered the conspirators' executions, but Leo requested that they instead be exiled, with the unpopular pope perhaps seeing an opportunity to impress with capacity for forgiveness.

Crowned 'Emperor of the Romans' on Christmas Day that same year by the grateful pope, the official report insists that Charlemagne was ambushed like some sort of early-Medieval surprise party. The king's biographer, the monk Einhard, claimed that his liege had such "aversion [to being crowned Emperor] that he declared he would not have set foot in the church... if he could have foreseen the designs of the pope."

It's entirely possible that Charlemagne and Leo came to some agreement during their year together. After all, the idea of grinning priests hiding a bejewelled imperial crown as if it were a birthday cake is too ludicrous to contemplate. Documents from his reign reveal that Charlemagne preferred using the title 'Charles, the most serene Augustus crowned by God, the great, peaceful Emperor ruling the Roman Empire' rather than the simpler and more often used 'Emperor of the Romans'. These aren't entirely the actions of someone with an aversion to the role, and the king's apparent humility may have been as expertly stage-managed

Birth of the modern Europe

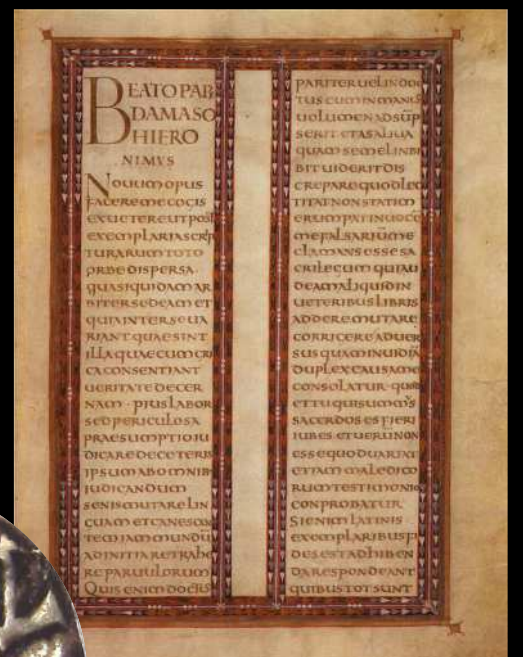
Three big ways in which Charlemagne changed the continent

01 Man of letters

Frustrated by his own difficulty in mastering the written word, Charlemagne rolled out a system of reforms to the very shape of writing, insisting on a double space to separate words, an indent at the start of a paragraph and punctuation marks to indicate where the reader should pause or stop. Question marks and lower case letters also appeared.

02 Silver age

Due to a shortage of gold, Charlemagne and the Anglo-Saxon King Offa standardised their currencies based on a pound of silver - in Latin, libra - which was broken down into 20 sous, each of 12 deniers. This is the origin of many global currencies past and present, from the British pound to the Italian lira.



03 Out of the dark

Charlemagne's interest in the arts led to the Carolingian Renaissance, a flowering of art, literature, poetry and learning. The Dark Ages traditionally cover the 6th to 13th centuries, but for the Franks it was over before it began, and 90 per cent of surviving Roman manuscripts do so because monks copied them.

"The way Charlemagne signed his name changed nothing of the way he conducted his affairs"



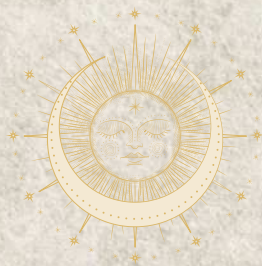
Charlemagne orders the construction of a city to ford the River Main - Frankfurt, or Frank Ford

as Leo's mercy. Nonetheless, with his rule over the Frankish lands uncontested and his empire secured through sheer military prowess, Charlemagne no more needed to declare himself Roman emperor than the fearsome Charles Martel needed to be king. The vulnerable pope, however, required an emperor in order to protect himself and the vast empire with the Church at its heart. Only Rome had nostalgia for its lost empire; the Franks held their 4th century resistance to Roman rule, and their role in dismembering the Roman Empire, as a point of fierce pride. Ultimately though, the way Charlemagne signed his name changed nothing of the way he conducted his affairs, and the impact of his ascension - reluctant or willing - to Europe's highest office would take another 150 years to make itself fully known.

The first Holy Roman Emperor, Otto I, took the title in 962 CE and reinvented himself in the Frankish king's image, creating a powerful multi-ethnic state and a crown that would endure for over 1,000 years.

Through the Holy Roman Empire, Charlemagne's rule defined not just the primacy of France as one of Europe's imperial, religious and cultural superpowers, but of numerous Austrian, German and Italian states too.

A career that began for Charlemagne as king of the Franks ended not just as emperor, but also as the father of the Europe that we can still recognise today.



THE ISLAMIC GOLDEN AGE

After the fall of the Roman Empire, Islam began to flourish, and brought about a new wave of advancements in medicine, philosophy, alchemy and more...



From the 8th to the 14th century, Islam flourished. The growth of the religion spurred on a period of cultural, economic and scientific advancement like no other. Following the death of Muhammad, the caliphs – the new Arab leaders – built and established a new city, Baghdad, as the heart of the Abbasid Caliphate. Conveniently located between Europe and Asia, Baghdad was an integral area for trade and the exchange of ideas. Over time it transformed into a hub of learning and commerce and, for a while, it became an unrivalled centre of science, medicine, education and philosophy. The period welcomed in what is now referred to as the Islamic Golden Age.

Knowledge was regularly shared at the famous House of Wisdom, or the Grand Library of Baghdad, where scholars from far and wide and with different cultural backgrounds gathered to translate all of the world's classical knowledge into the Arabic language. As insight into topics like art and culture, healthcare, law, theology, engineering and natural sciences expanded, so did the understanding of alchemy.

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the study of alchemical development moved to the Caliphate and the Islamic civilisation, which became one of the world's leading cultures when it came to both traditional alchemy and early practical chemistry. Even the word alchemy was originally derived from the Arabic word al-kimiyā. Some historians also believe that it came from the Egyptian word kemi, meaning black. Much more is known about ancient Islamic alchemy than that of other cultures owing to the fact that Islamic alchemy was far better documented, with most of the earlier writings that have been passed



The Islamic Golden Age

During the Islamic Golden Age, the city of Baghdad became a hub of learning and commerce, and changed Middle Eastern culture forever



Middle Ages

down through the years being preserved as Arabic translations of the originals.

Ancient Islamic chemistry – or Arabic chemistry, as it is also often called – covers a whole matter of topics. The late Al Sabra, a professor of the history of science who specialised in the history of optics and science in medieval Islam, narrowed down the definition. In his article *Situating Arabic Science: Location versus Essence*, he described Arabic (or Islamic) science as a term describing the scientific research and activities of people who lived in a region that roughly extended chronologically from the eighth century AD to the beginning of the modern era, and geographically from the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa to the Indus Valley and from southern Arabia to the Caspian Sea, or the region covered by what has been described as Islamic civilisation for most of that period. The research and findings of Islamic chemistry were mostly expressed in the Arabic language. Ancient Islamic alchemy, on the other hand, refers to a very particular subset of Islamic chemistry: the search for metallic transmutation.

Though different cultures had different approaches when it came to the sciences during the Middle Ages, there was often overlap between that of the Arabic areas and that of the Western hemisphere. Cultural, religious and scientific diffusion of information between the Eastern and Western societies began with the conquests of Alexander the Great in the 3rd century BCE, with greater communication between the two being allowed. Thousands of years later, those Eastern territories that had been conquered, like Iran and Iraq, became the centre of religious movements, including Christianity, Manicheism and Zoroastrianism, all of which involve sacred texts as a basis and encouraged literacy and the spread of ideas, and the Qur'an, Islam's holy book, became an important source of theology, morality, law and cosmology. Following Muhammed's death, Islam spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula, Persia, Syria, Egypt, Israel and Byzantium by way of military conquest. With it went a keenness for knowledge and scholarship, and the concept of sciences like alchemy. Islamic alchemy was studied as a subset of science, but it still held onto the mystical and religious aspects that set Eastern alchemy apart from the brand that was studied in the Western hemisphere, which predominantly held Christian ideals. Just as the work of the likes of the so-called Hermes Trismegistus is studied today in order to better understand the workings of ancient Western alchemy, Islamic alchemy has many rockstars of its own. Jābir ibn Ḥayyān, one of the most famous Islamic alchemists, covered a vast range of topics –

Rhazes is well-known for discovering numerous compounds and chemicals, including alcohol and sulphuric acid, through his work in alchemy and chemistry



وَلَيْسَتْ لَهُ غَايَةٌ مُوَافِقٌ لِلْمَنَانَةِ وَالْكَلَامِ
صَنَعَهُ شَرَابٌ لِلزَّهَامِ وَالشَّعَالِ
وَوَزَمَ الْبَطْنَ وَاسْتَرَخَا الْمَعْدَنَ حَتَّى رُبِعَ أَوْقِيهِ وَأَصُولُ نُونٍ شَرِيقِهِ
وَقَلَّلَ الْيُسُوجَ وَشَرِيقِهِ دَقَقَهُ جَمِيعًا وَأَرْبَطَهُ خَرْقَهُ وَاجْعَلَهُ فِي لَبَةِ اقْتِطِطِ شَرَابِ
طَبِيبٌ وَارْتَدَّتْ ثَلَاثَةُ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ صَفَّاهُ أَرْفَعَهُ فِي آتَاءٍ نَظِيفٍ اشْرَبَتْ مِنْهُ بَعْدَ الْعِشَاءِ

Islamic scholars translated as much classical knowledge from Latin to Arabic as possible, meaning historians have been able to learn from the records

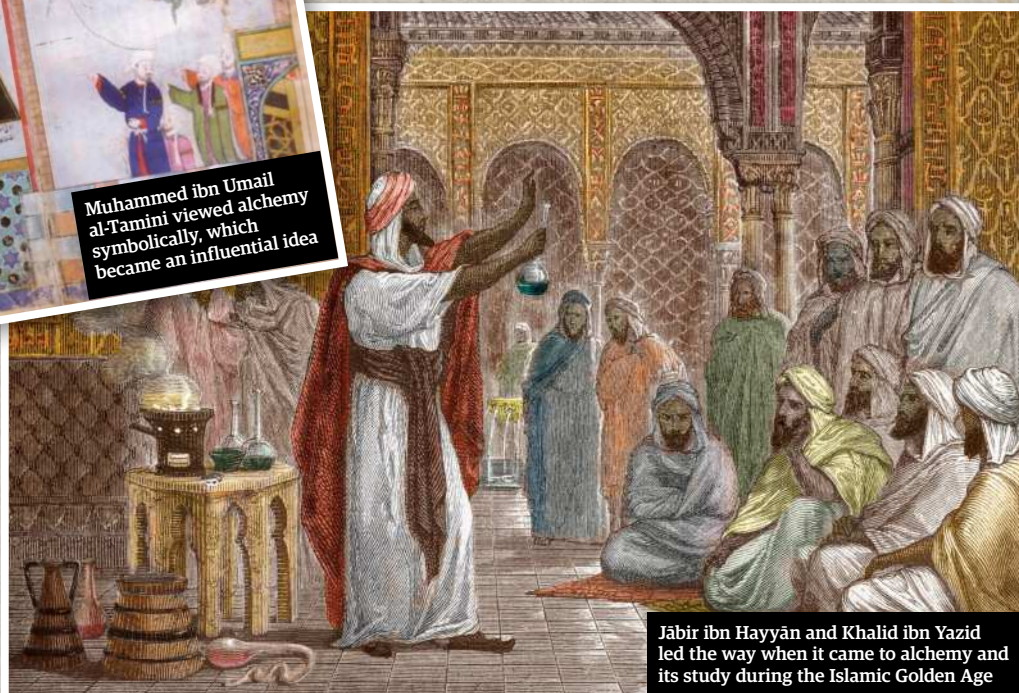
including cosmology, philosophy, astrology and more – in his written works known as the *Jabirian Corpus*. Khalid ibn Yazid, also known as King Calid, was the author of the first alchemical work translated from Arabic to Latin.

Perhaps not as well known as Jābir or King Calid but just as notable was Dhūl-Nūn al-Misri, an early Egyptian mystic and ascetic who studied alchemy, medicine and Greek philosophy in his early life. Both during his lifetime and after, Dhūl-Nūn's work and legendary wisdom have caused him to be celebrated by Islamic thinkers and considered one of the greatest saints of the early era of Sufism. As a legendary thaumaturge, he was supposed to have known the secret of the Egyptian hieroglyphs.

None of his written works have survived the centuries but his sayings and poems, both rich in mystical imagery, endured in the oral



Muhammed ibn Umail al-Tamini viewed alchemy symbolically, which became an influential idea



Jābir ibn Hayyān and Khalid ibn Yazid led the way when it came to alchemy and its study during the Islamic Golden Age

tradition and brought him even more fame and appreciation over the years. Although much of Dhūl-Nūn's legacy revolves around the mystical side of him, he was also a well known Hermetic alchemist and is often associated with Jābir ibn Hayyān. Another influential Islamic alchemist was Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi, also known by his Latinised name Rhazes. He was also a polymath, physician, philosopher and an important figure in the history of medicine. Through his work, Rhazes made a number of fundamental contributions to a number of different fields: he wrote a pioneering book on smallpox and measles and their characteristics, carried out integral work on the understanding of ophthalmology, or the diagnosis and treatment of eye disorders, and was even the first person to recognise the reaction of the pupil to light. Through translation, this medical work was passed around European practitioners and profoundly influenced medical education in the West, with some of his books making it to the medical curriculum in Western universities.

However, it was his work with compounds and chemicals that caught the attention of alchemists all over the world, and many of the chemical instruments he developed are still used today. Within alchemic and chemistry circles, Rhazes is well-known for discovering numerous previously undiscovered compounds and chemicals, including alcohol, which he obtained through perfecting methods of distillation, and sulphuric acid. He also strongly believed in the possibility of transmutation of lesser metals into silver and gold, a theory that was attested after his death by Arab scholar Abū al-Faraj Muhammad ibn Ishāq al-Nadīm's chapter

on alchemy in his book *Kitāb al-Fihrist*. Rhazes was so renowned in the field that some of his contemporaries even believed that the alchemist had obtained the secret of transforming iron and copper into gold. His studies can be better understood through reading his many texts on alchemy, most of which are written in Persian.

The work of 10th century alchemist Muhammed ibn Umail al-Tamini gives insight into a different side of alchemy that was alive and well during the Islamic Golden Age. Very little is known about his life, as he famously lived in seclusion, but his writings suggest that he was born in Spain to Arabic parents before living and working in Egypt.

As a mystical and symbolic alchemist, he was known for rejecting alchemists who took their subject too literally. Where some of his peers studied the sciences of metallurgy and chemistry, Muhammed ibn Umail al-Tamini preferred to focus on the symbolic meaning of alchemy, which he believed was tragically overlooked. In his work *Book of the Explanation of the Symbols*, he emphasised that the sages spoke in symbols and explained the study of alchemy as an allegory for something more complex. Though Muhammed ibn Umail al-Tamini was devoted to Greek alchemy, he wrote as a Muslim and frequently mentioned his religion in his work and even quotes verses from the Quran. As well as studying the symbols of alchemy, Muhammed ibn Umail al-Tamini also presented himself as an interpreter, and set his treatise *Silvery Water* in the Egyptian temple known as the Prison of Yasuf, where the Jewish, Christian and Muslim figure Joseph famously interpreted the dreams of the Pharaoh.

Age of gold

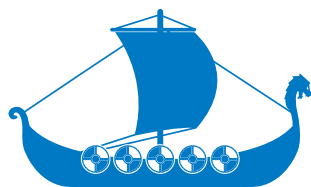
'Golden Age' might seem like quite a grand way of describing Islamic culture at the time of the Middle Ages, but it's also rather fitting. The term sits in contrast to the European Dark Ages, the historical period that occurred in the Western world shortly after the fall of the Roman Empire and saw a huge demographic, cultural and economic decline.

The term 'Islamic Golden Age' first started being used in 19th century literature about Islamic history in the context of Orientalism, the western aesthetic fashion of imitating or depicting aspects of the Eastern world. The term was notably used by the author of *A Handbook for Travellers in Syria and Palestine*, published in 1868, which said that Damascus' most beautiful mosques were "like Mohammedanism itself, rapidly decaying," and relics of "the golden age of Islam."

As well as describing the culture of the time, "Islamic Golden Age" was also used to comment on military achievement. The timespan differs depending on the context. Some historians extend the Golden Age to the duration of the Caliphate, while others have it end after a few decades of Rashidun conquests with the death of Umar and the First Fitna. Since the second half of the 20th century, the term has mostly been used to describe the cultural side of things.



The term 'Islamic Golden Age' was first used in the context of the western aesthetic fashion known as Orientalism



WHEN VIKINGS RULED THE WAVES

Portrayed as bloodthirsty pirates, pillaging innocent villagers, Vikings also ruled the waves with a lucrative trade network



The great white sail cracked as the vicious Atlantic wind lashed against it, but still the ship sailed on. Long and sleek, the warship, crafted from mighty oak, crashed through the waves, sending a sharp spray of water across the deck. The men inside rowed as one, their mighty muscles straining as they plunged the oars deep into the water and drove the ship forward through the turbulent waves. Their strength alone brought the ship to land and they poured out onto the beach. Dressed in thick woollen tunics, the warriors were armed with an array of weapons, from long sharpened spears to hefty battle-axes. With a booming voice one man yelled to the others, thrusting his sword into the air, and the rest bellowed in response. Then onward he ran, as the united force thundered uphill against the billowing wind. Their destination? A coastal monastery bursting full of gold, gems and hefty food supplies ripe for the taking, and only a collection of quiet, unassuming monks to protect it.

This image of monstrous invaders laying siege to innocent monasteries and pillaging them of their precious items is the first one that leaps to

mind when many are confronted with the word 'Viking'. The portrayal of the Norse tribesmen as rapists and pillagers is so prevailing that it's often forgotten that the word Viking itself means to go on an expedition. It is easy to fall into the assumption that these people were nothing more than pirates – taking from those too weak to defend themselves. And it is undeniable that this happened: the

Contrary to modern preconceptions, Vikings had excellent hygiene, with many bathing at least once a week

Viking invaders sailed from Scandinavia to coasts of the British Isles and beyond, invading villages and monasteries, killing the inhabitants and stealing their riches. It's spoken about in first-hand accounts and it's still being evidenced today in the Viking hoards left by anxious townsfolk who hurried to hide their riches from the invaders. However, this only tells half the story. Two things powered the Viking civilisation: the vicious raids they're famous for, and something else – trade. Not only did Vikings set up new colonies in the lands they invaded, but they also created powerful trade routes that helped their nation to become one of the most prosperous in the world.

For the majority of the year, the same Vikings who had pillaged the towns worked the land, tirelessly toiling in the fields, or creating intricate and valuable ornaments and jewellery to fund their blossoming civilisation.





Vicious Vikings

Meet Scandinavia's most terrifying plunderers

Erik the Red 951 - 1003



Infamous for: Being exiled from Iceland for murder. He went on to colonise Greenland

Guthrum UNKNOWN - 890



Infamous for: Waging war against the king of the West Saxons - Alfred the Great

Ingvar the Far-Travelled UNKNOWN



Infamous for: Pillaging the shores of the Caspian Sea

Rodulf Haraldsson UNKNOWN - 873



Infamous for: Leading raids in Britain, France and Germany

Ivar the Boneless UNKNOWN



Infamous for: Invading Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of England using the Great Heathen Army

VIKING VOYAGES

As expert ship builders, the Vikings were able to voyage further and wider than any civilisation before...

Centuries before Christopher Columbus would stumble upon the land now known as America, the Vikings had claimed the Atlantic Ocean as their own backyard. They had mastered Russia's river system and reached the Middle East; their impressive voyages helped them to become leaders of a rapidly developing world and this new Viking civilisation thrived thanks to the power of a single creation: the ship.

The entire Viking society was built around their ships, which were bigger, lighter and faster than any before. These vessels had been perfected over many years, with the power to brave the vicious storms of the Atlantic Ocean, but also the sleek construction to skim through shallow rivers. These powerful and efficient ships enabled their mighty passengers to create colonies all over the world, and the building and maintaining of these vessels became the basis of Viking society.

Vikings were using their mighty sea power to trade around the coast of Europe while the British Empire was merely a collection of scattered kingdoms unable to defend their shores. The Viking sailors were aware that it was often easier to take the same journey by water rather than land, with some journeys taking five days by sea, compared to a month on land, and they used this to their advantage. Longer voyages were carried out by those settling in strange and exciting foreign lands, and the Viking civilisation spread to Iceland, Greenland, and even to Canada and North America.

The image of a Viking longboat crashing through the waves with its fierce dragon figurehead and its long, sleek curves is certainly an inspiring one, but for those onboard, life was not quite so glamorous. With no shelter, at night the sailors used the sail as a makeshift tent that they would sleep under, shivering beneath blankets or animal skin sleeping bags. The only sustenance would be dried or salted meat with water, beer or sour milk to drink. The sinking of vessels was no great tragedy, but rather expected on long journeys. There would be no rescue sent as usually nobody knew about sunken ships for weeks, months or even years. It was not unusual for any number of ships to go missing on voyages across the brutal Atlantic Ocean. When Erik the Red travelled to Greenland, only 14 of his original 25 ships managed to arrive safely.

However, it was the determination and hardiness of the voyagers willing to take these risks that led the Vikings to valuable and exotic treasures and trade lying along the coastlines of the world.

Toward the end of the 8th century, Viking voyagers began an invasion of England that would forever determine the fate of the island nation. By 860 this pioneering spirit led them to the assault of Constantinople, then some 20 years later, in 885, Viking ships attacked the mighty city of Paris. Driven by the quest for trade, territory, plunder and a thirst for adventure, the impact of these historic voyages can still be felt around the world today.

Some Vikings were laid to rest in boats surrounded by their weapons, valuable property and even slaves

Woollen sail

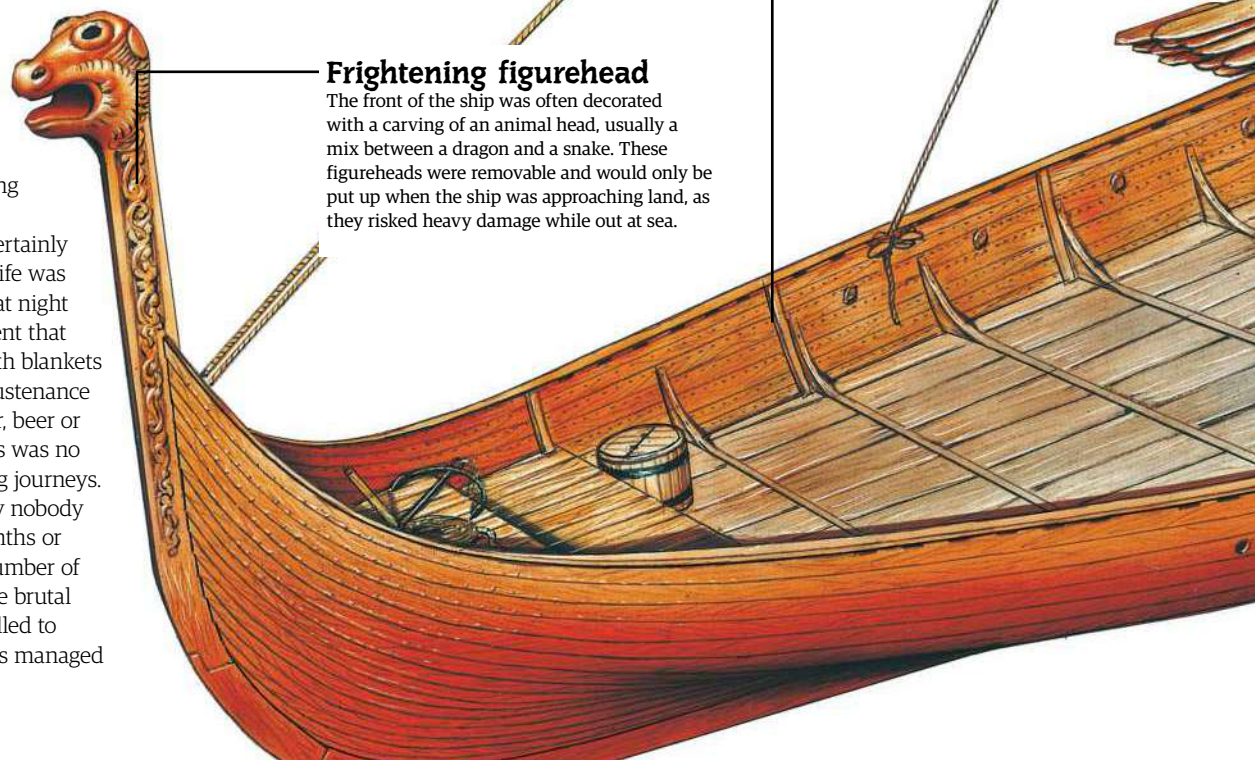
Longships featured one large square sail approximately ten metres wide. These were most likely made from wool, though no sails have survived to confirm this. To keep the sail's shape when it got wet, the wool was covered with criss-crossing leather strips.

Wooden hull

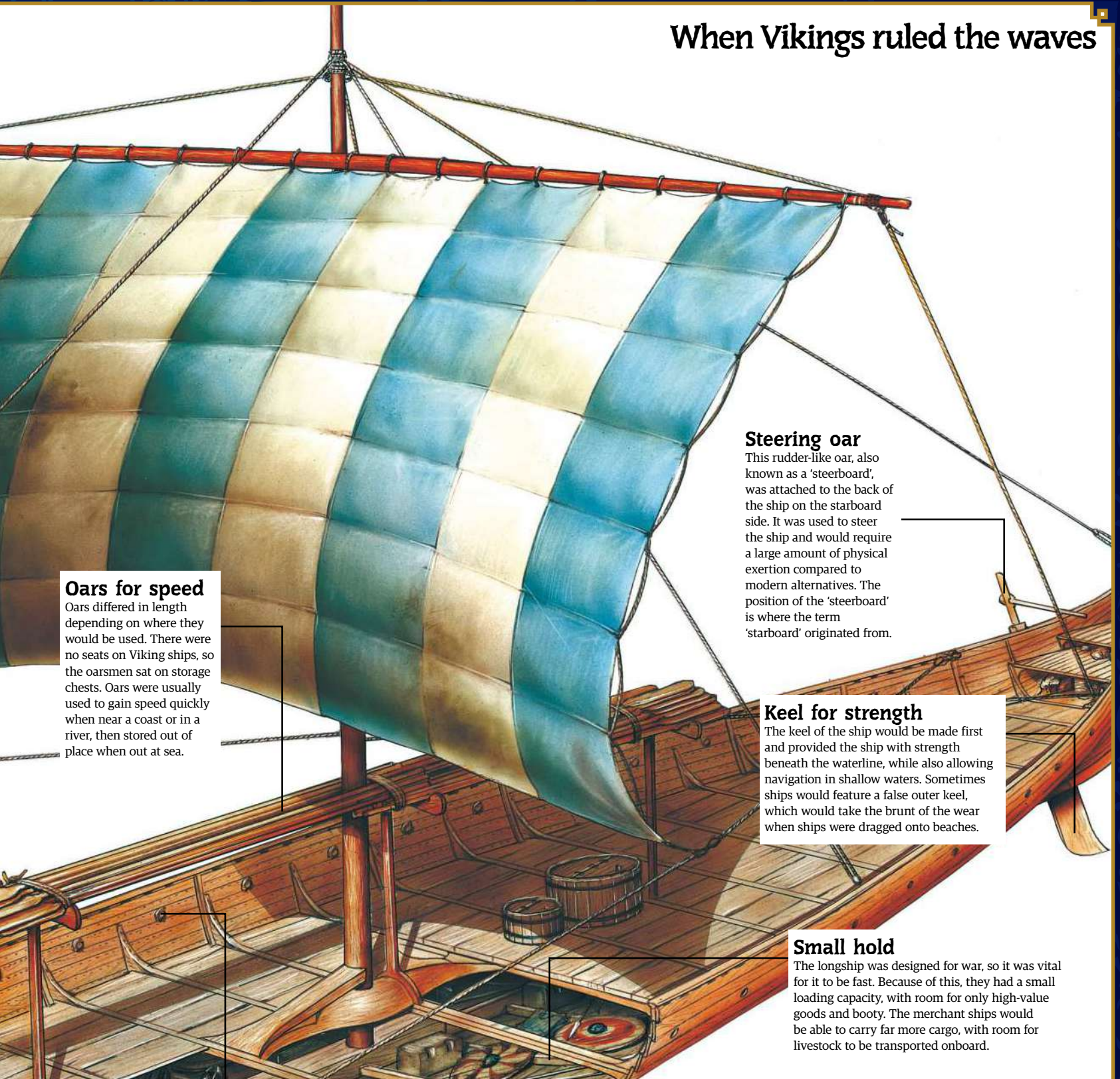
All Viking ships were made in the same way, using planks of oak or pine overlapped and nailed together. The ships were then reinforced and made watertight by using tarred wool or other animal furs to fill in the gaps between the planks.

Frightening figurehead

The front of the ship was often decorated with a carving of an animal head, usually a mix between a dragon and a snake. These figureheads were removable and would only be put up when the ship was approaching land, as they risked heavy damage while out at sea.



When Vikings ruled the waves



Oars for speed

Oars differed in length depending on where they would be used. There were no seats on Viking ships, so the oarsmen sat on storage chests. Oars were usually used to gain speed quickly when near a coast or in a river, then stored out of place when out at sea.

Steering oar

This rudder-like oar, also known as a 'steerboard', was attached to the back of the ship on the starboard side. It was used to steer the ship and would require a large amount of physical exertion compared to modern alternatives. The position of the 'steerboard' is where the term 'starboard' originated from.

Keel for strength

The keel of the ship would be made first and provided the ship with strength beneath the waterline, while also allowing navigation in shallow waters. Sometimes ships would feature a false outer keel, which would take the brunt of the wear when ships were dragged onto beaches.

Small hold

The longship was designed for war, so it was vital for it to be fast. Because of this, they had a small loading capacity, with room for only high-value goods and booty. The merchant ships would be able to carry far more cargo, with room for livestock to be transported onboard.

Oarports

These were holes for the oars that ran along the entire length of the ship on both sides. The holes would also be used to tie shields in place, but only when the ships were in port as the risk of losing their vital protection while the ship was in motion was too great.



Navigation

Before some of the greatest explorers in history were born, Vikings had already navigated their way around the world. But with no compasses, satellites or radios, how did this tribe of Scandinavians manage to map the globe so impressively? The answer is simpler than you might expect - experience. Rather than relying on devices, Viking travellers trusted nature to guide them. They would study the position of the stars and Sun, and even the colour of the sea and movement of the waves would give them an indication of how

close they were to land. Once a journey was complete, sailors would recount their voyage to others who wished to make the same journey. This ancient wisdom would be passed through generations.

The only tools Viking sailors needed were related to the Sun. For example, a sun-shadow board would be used at noon to check whether the ship was on course. A sun-stone could also be used on foggy days when the Sun was not visible. This stone would change colour to indicate the position of the Sun behind the clouds.

Middle Ages

DEADLIEST WEAPONS

Sword

With blades up to 90cm long, swords were designed to be held in one hand, with the shield in the other. Only high-status Vikings would carry swords with elaborately designed hilts. Swords were often given names like Leg-biter, and were passed down through generations.

Bow and arrow

Made from yew, ash or elm trees, Viking bows had a draw weight of around 100 pounds and were pulled back to the chin. Arrows were created in various shapes and would be made from combinations of iron, eagle feathers and bronze.

Knives

Vikings had two different types of knives - plain, single-edged knives and the seax - similar to a modern-day machete. The seax were heavier than normal knives and were fashioned in a 'broken-back' style.

Spear

The main weapon of the peasant class, Viking spears had metal heads mounted on wooden shafts of two to three metres. Spears were designed according to their purpose, used for both thrusting and throwing. The weapon of Odin, king of the Norse Gods, it had great cultural meaning.

Axe

One of the most common Viking weapons, battle-axes had larger heads and longer shafts than the ones used as tools. Some axes were as long as a man and were wielded with both hands. There were also smaller throwing axes.



A dramatic Viking raid on the English coast

RAIDS

No monastery was safe from the fiery scourge that swept over the land from beyond the sea

They had arrived in the dead of night; the darkness had been so thick that the monks had not seen their ship until it landed on the shore. It was too late, they all knew it, to call for help. A brother had run into the halls, waking the monks from their beds with shrill cries of "The demons are here! They're coming! They're coming!" Some of the brothers began to scream for help, while others leapt into action, grabbing precious items and concealing them in the folds of their cloaks. But already the doors were down and already the invaders were here. They were huge - bigger than any man the humble brethren had ever seen - with their wild blond hair and mighty weapons grasped in hand. They leapt upon the monks immediately, hacking at their bodies with a frenzied ferocity. Some pleaded for mercy, some did not have time to plead. There was no time for negotiations; how can one negotiate with pure, unbridled violence? There was only death, destruction and blood as they swung their axes and jabbed their swords. One brother alone had managed to escape the massacre. He speedily weaved through the figures and threw himself down into the tall grass outside. He watched as body after body was thrown from the doors of his home; he watched as men still alive were cast off the high cliff into the sea; and he watched as the heathens set the holy walls alight with flame. The hot wind lashed against his face and robes in the flickering darkness. He grasped a golden chalice

in his hands numbly, the only thing he had been able to rescue before fleeing. The invaders had the rest of it, all the precious items loaded into sacks on their large ships. And almost as quickly as they had arrived, they slipped away from the shore and returned to the darkness.

In 793, a Viking crew sailing near northeast England raided a Christian monastery at Lindisfarne. For the Vikings the strange, exposed building packed full of valuable treasures was an opportunity too good to miss, but for many in England this shocking and unprovoked attack marked the beginning of the scourge of Viking raids. These sporadic but violent assaults continued across the coasts of England, and by 855 a force known as the Great Heathen Army had arrived in East Anglia. The army made their way across the country, capturing cities as they went, overrunning and overpowering

the land. The Scandinavian warriors also launched invasions across the coasts of Ireland and all over mainland Europe. These raids even stretched to the Baltic Sea and Persia. The initial reasons for such rapid expansion are hotly contested between historians, with some believing the raids were a brutal response to the spread of Christianity, that the Scandinavian population had grown too large for their land, or perhaps they were the actions of men simply drawn by the thrill of adventure. Whatever the reasons, the invasions left a lasting scar on those who lived to see them.

Blond was a popular hair colour among Viking men, and they would often bleach their hair and beards

How the Vikings raided

1 Preparation

Vikings did not strike haphazardly; their raids were planned down to the finest detail. They would first identify a weak target to attack along the coasts, which they knew perfectly. Because they had the fastest ships in the world they would launch their attack without any prior warning, ensuring that no help could reach their targets in time. Towards the mid-9th century these attacks had escalated to great fleets of 300-400 ships.

2 Gather horses

Viking ships were designed to row up river, but if the target was some distance away they would leave their ships and travel by horse. With no horses on the ships, they would raid nearby villages for mounts. These would be used to transport themselves and their booty over land.

3 Surprise attack

The pious and humble monks did not stand a chance faced with their fierce opponents armed with superior weapons. The well-trained Vikings would launch a sudden, vicious attack on the monastery, slaying the holy men. Some would be stripped naked, and cast outside, some taken prisoner, and others thrown into the sea.

4 Loot and burn

Once the monks were dealt with, Vikings pillaged at will. They plundered any valuables they could get their hands on, including food, but especially precious relics. However, they often ignored the valuable bibles. Once they had looted the buildings they set fire to the monasteries and the surrounding villages.

5 Escape

Laden down with their prisoners and booty, the Vikings would ride back to their ships, load them and sail away. They would later sell the gold, jewels and sacred emblems, and the monks would also fetch a high price in the European slave market.

To see more of © Stan Dahlsett's work visit www.dahlsett.com



ANATOMY OF A VIKING WARRIOR

Helmet

Vikings did not, in fact, have horned helmets. Instead, they were round with a guard around the eyes and nose. There is only one complete Viking helmet in existence - others may have been passed down through families then sold for scrap.

Hair

Long hair was favoured by both men and women. It would also be acceptable to shave one's hair or to wear it rolled in a tight bun near the nape of their neck. Men would also carefully groom their moustaches and beards.

Armour

Mail shirts or metal armour would have been expensive for the average raider, as would leather, so these were reserved only for those of high status. Ordinary Vikings likely fought wearing their everyday clothes, made from wool.

Shoes

Shoes were most often made from one long piece of leather sewn to the shape of the wearer's foot. Leather straps would be used to secure the boot to the foot, and thick woollen socks were worn to keep heat in.

Shield

Round shields were common and were made from light wood, such as fir or poplar and were reinforced with leather or iron around the edge. Round shields could get as large as 120cm in diameter, but most were around 75 to 90cm.














Lindisfarne priory remains a place of pilgrimage to this day

The attack on Lindisfarne

Lindisfarne is a holy island off the northeast coast of England, and during the Middle Ages was the base of Christian evangelising in the north of the country. However, in 793 a Viking raid on the monastery of Lindisfarne sent a wave of dismay washing over Christians worldwide. On 7 June, Viking raiders invaded the monastery and "destroyed God's church on Lindisfarne, with plunder and slaughter." Although the attack was not the first in the country, it was unusual in that it attacked the heart of the Christian nation in the north. A contemporary scholar wrote of the attack, "Never before has such terror appeared in Britain as we have now suffered from a pagan race [...] The heathens poured out the blood of saints around the altar, and trampled on the bodies of saints in the temple of God, like dung in the streets."



What were the goods worth?

	=			1 FEMALE SLAVE = 1 COW AND 1 OX
	=			1 SUIT OF CHAIN MAIL = 2 HORSES OR 4 MALE SLAVES
	=			1 HORSE = 3 COWS
	=			1 STIRRUP = 1 SWORD OR 125G OF SILVER



Raiders or traders?



Stuart Perry, or Fastulf Geraltsson as he is known to the public, is the Jorvik Group's Interactive Team Leader. He manages a team of Viking interactives at Jorvik

Viking Centre and archaeology and history interpreters across the group's five attractions

What was the motivation behind the Viking invasions? Were they simply bloodthirsty raiders, or did they have more civilised aims?

The motivation behind the Viking invasions was simple; farmland. The Vikings, or Norsemen – which is a more accurate name since a 'Viking' was a sea-borne raider that specialised in hit-and-run attacks – were searching for land.

Scandinavia is not rich in arable land – there is simply too much water and too many mountainous regions to support a population over a certain size. The Vikings had been raiding the coast of England since 793 – the famous attack on Lindisfarne – and would have had plenty of opportunity to see the abundance of good farmland, healthy crops and fat cattle all over the country. Combine this with the riches presented in the monasteries and towns they were so fond of raiding and England became a perfect area for expansion.

As for being 'bloodthirsty raiders', there is that element to the culture, yes, but it was not simply for violence that the Vikings went raiding. It was for profit. Rarely would the Vikings destroy an entire settlement, and the reason is simple; they wanted to come back and do it again! Raiding was a job for young impetuous men – but it was not the main focus of life in early Medieval Scandinavia. It is this message that we convey at every opportunity here at Jorvik Viking Centre.



SILVER



SILK, SILVER, SPICES



Evidence shows that Vikings were expert traders of many goods

TRADE

Vikings were not powered by brutality but instead a complex and prosperous trade network

Although raiding and pillaging provided a quick intake of wealth, it was not a stable way to live or to build a civilisation. Instead, the Vikings dedicated far more of their time to building up a prosperous and powerful trading network. Because of their superior ship-building skills they were able to travel to trade in faraway lands, obtaining a host of exotic and valuable goods. Their specially designed trading ships were able to carry up to 35 tonnes of cargo, including silver and even livestock.

Trading markets began to emerge along the west Baltic Sea in the mid-8th century where people came from far and wide to trade an array of goods. As these markets flourished, traders decided to settle permanently along the routes and they transformed into trading towns. Birka in Sweden, Kaupang in Norway and Hedeby in Denmark all grew to be prosperous and bustling trading settlements, with the inhabitants all working as craftsmen and merchants. Prosperous trading routes also emerged along the British Isles, with York and Dublin developing into major trading centres.

As the trade boom increased the Vikings travelled further afield, across the Baltic Sea and along the Russian rivers. They founded more trading towns in Kiev and Novgorod. The Viking traders even went as far as Istanbul, the capital of the mighty Byzantine Empire across the Black Sea. This perilous journey was one only the Vikings dared attempt, through vicious rapids and battling hostile natives. The Vikings continued their trading

journey inland, bringing their goods to Jerusalem and Baghdad. The lure of the Silk Road and the exotic riches of the East were too good to resist, and Vikings met with traders from the Far East in their trading centres in Russia, trading fur and slaves for silk and spices.

Silver coins were the most common form of payment, but this was unlike today's currency where different coins are worth a particular value. The coins were weighed in scales to determine their value; this is because a lot of coins were melted down and crafted into intricate and beautiful jewellery to trade on.

The great extent of the Viking trade network can be seen today in the hoards of silver coins, created in England, which have been found in Sweden, not to mention the 40,000 Arabic coins and the 38,000 German coins also uncovered there.

Nordic bowls, Mediterranean silk and Baltic axe heads have even been discovered buried under English soil.

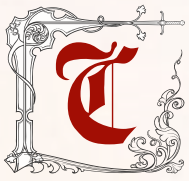
This vast and illustrious trade network attracted a wealth of eager and talented artists and craftsmen. Viking bead-makers would import glass from Western Europe to create an array of simple and decorative beads for the wealthy to adorn themselves with, while the ample supply of amber from the Baltic lands was fashioned into pendants and playing pieces. Skilled Viking craftsmen transformed their imported bronze to fine ornaments and mass-produced brooches, and deer antlers could even be used to make delicate and beautiful combs.

Viking wedding celebrations were huge occasions in a community, and could last for well over a week



How to capture a MEDIEVAL CASTLE

*From demolishing walls to starving out defenders, a siege in the Middle Ages
required innovative tactics, stamina and determination*



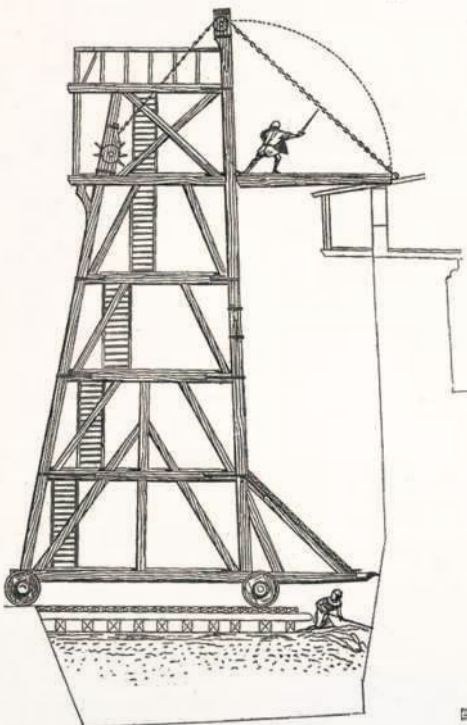
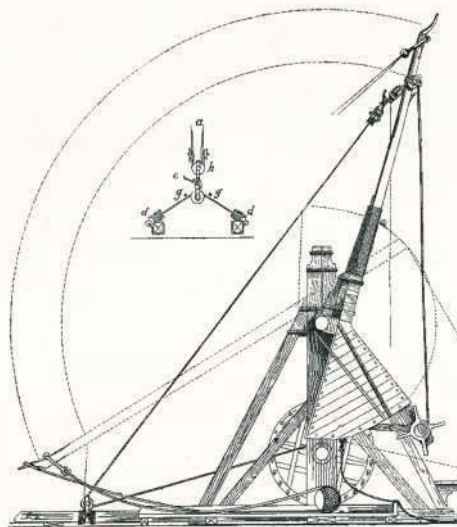
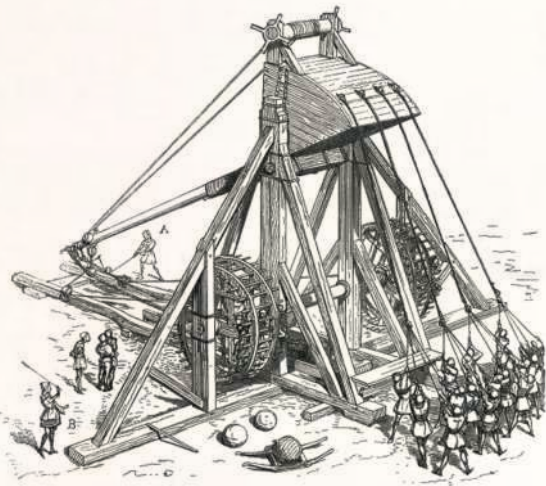
Castles were the power bases of the Medieval world. Occupied by kings, nobles and knights, defeating one of these strongholds wasn't easy. To successfully bring

one down, a solid strategy was a must. First, the attacking force would need to occupy the surrounding lands to instil fear in the castle owners. If negotiation and diplomacy failed, an attacking force could resort to intimidation by seizing supply lines and pillaging the locality. If a white flag was still not forthcoming, the siege would officially begin. Prior to an attack, a messenger would sometimes be sent to the besieged castle, informing defenders of the force's intentions. After this notice was heeded, the castle would be restocked with weapons and provisions, ready to weather the coming storm.

There were many ways to try and break down the fortifications. An expensive yet destructive method was the use of huge wooden siege engines. Ranging from long-range trebuchets to

metal-capped battering rams, a castle could be assaulted from all directions. The best carpenters, blacksmiths and engineers were drawn from around the land to create the machines of war while knights who owed service provided the military muscle. Livestock, timber, tools and provisions would also be acquired. A camp was set up a safe distance from the castle and preparations would begin.

Meanwhile, the defenders made preparations of their own. Usually, a scorched-earth policy was implemented. This would deprive the surrounding area of any arable land to plunder, significantly depleting an advancing army's available resources. This involved doing major damage to the defenders' own land, but it was worthwhile if it helped prevent a siege. Inside the castle, men would be armed and stores restocked in anticipation of what was to follow. Sieging a castle was an imposing and frightening prospect and required inventive strategies, plentiful resources, a steely determination and a hefty slice of luck. Ready your mangonels and prepare for battle.



Five bloody Medieval sieges

A selection of the largest, longest and most destructive sieges from across the Middle Ages



Jerusalem 1099

Jerusalem is one of the most sieged cities in history, and in 1099 it experienced one of the bloodiest too. Part of the First Crusade, the Muslim and Jewish population was massacred as the Crusaders burst through the gates, suffering very heavy losses themselves too.



Acre 1189-91

After negotiations failed, Saladin besieged the Crusader stronghold of Acre during the Third Crusade. The siege lasted a total of 23 months and resulted in many Crusader deaths, but Saladin was defeated and dealt a serious blow in his attempt to retake the Crusader kingdom.



Château Gaillard 1204

The impressive defences of this French castle were eventually brought down by King Phillip after eight months of battle. The siege included almost every type of siege engine and was fought on both land and sea against the fortress.



Rochester 1215

Part of the First Barons' War, the siege of Rochester was an example of attackers digging under a castle. A fire fuelled by pig fat was started underneath the battlements and the defenders eventually surrendered as winter set in.



Cahir 1599

The most impregnable castle in the whole of Ireland, the Earl of Essex laid siege to the fortress under the orders of Queen Elizabeth I. It quickly succumbed to artillery, demonstrating how the advent of the cannon helped end the age of the Medieval castle.

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPONS

With money to burn and a realm to conquer, barons would splash out on the biggest and best siege engines available

For the best possible chance of victory during a siege in the Middle Ages, huge siege engines were financed to bring death and destruction upon a fortress and its inhabitants. These imposing machines rumbling into view could even frighten castles into submission before an arrow was nocked. Different siege engines were useful against different types of castles, so commanders would purchase what they needed depending on the terrain and defences they were going to face. As castles were often built with sieges in mind, many were surrounded by moats and steep climbs. It was also important to take a range of siege engines to keep the attack varied and relentless. For example, siege towers could soak up arrows and keep the defenders at bay while trebuchets and battering rams did damage to other parts of the stronghold. To ensure their machines would last and be as effective as possible, barons would source the best builders and tools to create their wooden army.



The English assault the walls of Calais with catapult and cannon in 1346

Siege tower

These towering structures were deadly in the Medieval era

Three storeys high

The largest of the towers would have three levels of attack. While the top section peered over the walls, the middle housed more troops who could shoot out at will, and also had a ladder to reinforce the top level.

Ladder help

Siege towers were very expensive and labour-intensive to make, so their use on the battlefield could be limited. Ladders were used to supplement towers, but as they had no protection, only the bravest soldiers would dare climb up them.

Dimensions

At 8m (26ft) high, siege towers were tall enough to rise over most castle defences. In response, many fortifications dredged moats or were constructed on the top of a hill to nullify their effectiveness.

Attack platform

Archers and men-at-arms would hitch a ride on the siege tower and storm over the walls. The towers were often covered in non-flammable material such as animal hides to protect from fire.

Drawbridge

Protecting the soldiers until they were right at the gates, the drawbridge would be flung upon and the infantry would pour out. One snag was the narrowness of the drawbridge, which would often only let soldiers out in single file.

Ammunition

Using the counterweight to great effect, huge 90kg (200lb) rocks battered down stone walls and knocked defenders off battlements. Diseased animals and even dead human bodies were also chucked into the castle courtyard in an attempt to infect inhabitants.

Battering ram

As well being effective weapons on their own, battering rams could be housed within a siege tower. Now covered and part of a larger mechanism, the ram would bring down gates and walls while troops attacked the top of the battlements.

How to capture a Medieval castle

Trebuchet

Prior to the age of cannon, these were the most forbidding siege engines of the Medieval era

Diversion tactic

The relentless barrage from a team of trebuchets could keep castle defenders constantly pinned down. This enabled other siege engines and methods of attack to be more effective while the defenders dealt with the trebuchet threat.

Attack system

The huge arm gave the trebuchet an excellent range in which to launch its projectiles. On average, the beam would be about 8-12m (26-40ft) long and the arm turned on an axle that was joined to the machine's structure.

Dimensions

At up to 18m (59ft) long, the trebuchet was a monster of Medieval siege warfare. With a range of about 200m (650ft), it could be constructed far out of range of fortifications.

Counterweight

The use of a weighted system rather than torsion gave the trebuchet an advantage over a mangonel. By using weights, it could launch larger loads at a quicker rate. The technology was some of the most sophisticated of the Medieval era.

Drawing the defenders out

As it was often out of range of a castle's archers, trebuchets could entice the defenders into raising the portcullis and coming out to battle, away from the safety of the battlements.

Triggers and levers

The efficiency and reliability of a trebuchet was demonstrated by its trigger. When the system was activated, it let go of the counterweight, launching the arm into attack mode.

Stakes

Despite its imposing figure, a trebuchet could be quite brittle. Stakes were hammered into the ground to prevent it falling or lifting when fired. It would have to be well protected as one direct hit could break the whole mechanism.



Battering rams and catapults

Better known as a mangonel, the catapult was an update of the Roman onager, which used torsion technology to fling projectiles. Perhaps the most primitive of all siege weapons, the battering ram was also very effective. Used to pound down walls, the wooden stake was often steel capped and could be part of a larger mechanism.

LAUNCH THE ATTACK

When negotiations failed and intimidation proved futile, siege was the only option

Getting a siege under way wasn't just a matter of loading up the engines and firing the first projectile. Depending on the forces available and the layout of the castle, each attack would begin differently. Most of the time, though, attackers would first attempt psychological warfare by launching severed heads into the castle. Then, the first target would be a weak point of the wall. In response, defenders barricaded their weakest points and increased attacks on the most potent siege engines. The key to a successful siege was continuous attack, as a break in hostilities would give defenders time to repair damage. Also

essential was stopping supplies reaching the castle, preventing the arrival of weapons and resources. If the breakthrough still didn't come, aggressors would spread out their attacks. Castles were often undermanned, so attacking from all angles could overwhelm them. If this still didn't work, it was time to get creative. Mining was a common way of getting in to a castle while staying out of the line of fire. Sieges could take months or even years, but attackers could often wait it out for longer than defenders. If the castle supply lines were cut off, it was only a matter of time before malnutrition and then starvation set in.

Reinforcements

A long siege required more than the initial raiding party. Reinforcements were a necessity for a long, drawn-out siege when fatigue and body counts could become too much for an attacking force to handle.

Unsung heroes

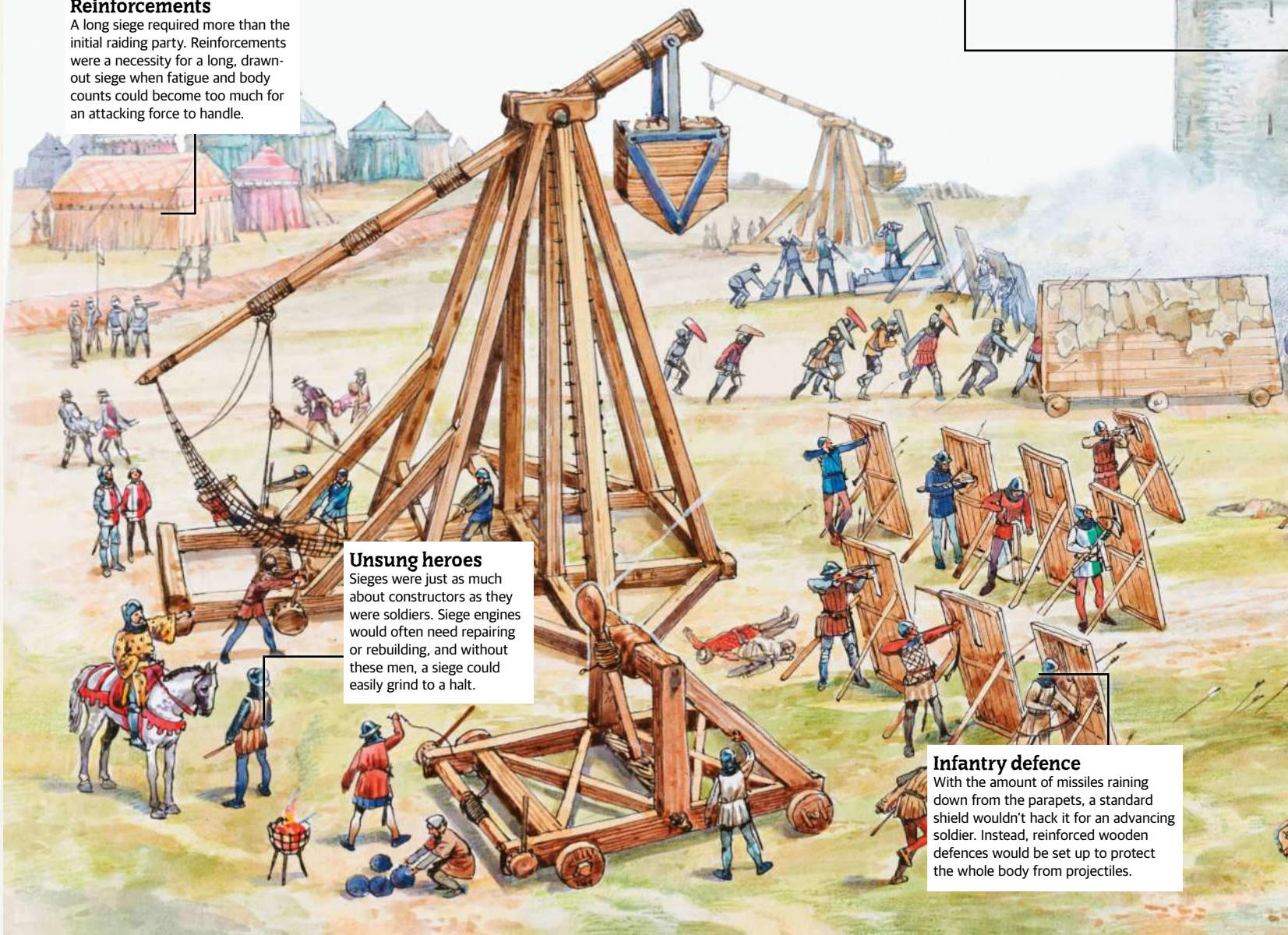
Sieges were just as much about constructors as they were soldiers. Siege engines would often need repairing or rebuilding, and without these men, a siege could easily grind to a halt.

What have the Romans ever done for us?

Both battering rams and siege towers were first used in the ancient era but had been substantially improved on by the Middle Ages. Towers were now bigger and better and could scale higher walls while rams had stronger steel caps for more penetration.

Infantry defence

With the amount of missiles raining down from the parapets, a standard shield wouldn't hack it for an advancing soldier. Instead, reinforced wooden defences would be set up to protect the whole body from projectiles.



How to capture a Medieval castle

Key defensive areas

The biggest and strongest turrets were placed in the areas most likely to be attacked. Designed to be higher than the tallest siege tower, they would be manned by archers and reinforced with extra stone.

Drawbridge

The only crossing point of the moat was the drawbridge. Closed at times of siege, it would be further protected by a metal portcullis and murder holes above it where defenders threw projectiles at advancing enemies.

Earth defences

A moat was a common feature of many castles. A simple dredged channel, it was effective in preventing battering rams and siege towers getting close to the battlements. Soldiers who tried to cross it were sitting ducks for archers.

The next era

Cannon was the weapon that brought the end of the Medieval castle. Able to blast through stone with ease, it swung sieges into the favour of the attackers.

How to defend a castle

When the attackers were on your doorstep, these measures could get you out of trouble

Look for spies

Prior to a siege, spies were often sent out to report on a castle's frailties. To prevent a Trojan horse-like attack, castle rulers would keep close tabs on who and what was entering and leaving their gates.

Ripples in the water

Underground, some of the most vicious fighting of the entire siege was fought in tunnels. If defenders lost here, their perimeter would be compromised, so guards would place a pot of water near the walls that rippled when miners were below.

Specialised battlements

Castle walls, built with attack in mind, were littered with anti-siege measures. Arrow loops gave archers a good shot at attackers while towers and gatehouses were constructed as troop garrisons. A barbican passage at the entrance would act as a death trap to oncoming foes.

Retreat to the keep

When the outer walls were breached, a strong keep was essential. The centrepiece of a castle, if the keep was surrounded, the only chance would be to hold on until help arrived and hope the food didn't run out.

Allied assistance

If an assaulting force was preoccupied with a siege, it would be vulnerable to attack from the rear. Any distraction would relieve the pressure and allow a counter-attack to vanquish the enemy once and for all.



What to do with the enemy

After defeat, what was left of the defenders had to be dealt with

Take prisoners

The defenders would eject women and children out of the keep. This cruel tactic gave the attackers prisoners to be used as a bargaining tool for surrender, but now only the best fighters remained with a much larger food supply.

Total annihilation

A popular method of ending a siege was killing all that stood in the way. Sometimes the nobility were held for ransom but, like at the siege of Bedford Castle in 1224, everyone could be killed as a warning to others.

New tenants

If the castle was in a strategic location or was an influential power base, the invading army would take it. It would act as an outpost on the frontier of a land and the former defenders would be exiled or enslaved.

It's a trap!

Defenders of a castle would implement all types of booby traps. These would be left for the new occupants to find for themselves and sometimes it was done the hard way. Using a captured prisoner would be a good tactic.

Raze to the ground

The advent of cannon made castles much easier to demolish. For many castles, the English Civil War was their last hurrah but they still proved valuable, such as when Stirling Castle held out against the Jacobites a century later.



Catapults and trebuchets were devastatingly effective at bringing down castle walls



The siege of the castle of Torres Novas, Portugal, by Islamic forces

TAKE THE CASTLE

With the outer walls down, it was time to storm the courtyards and break into the keep

When the walls were overrun and bodies lay strewn around the bailey, the keep, the centrepiece of the castle defences, was the only thing that stood in the way of victory. Some keeps were merely the central building, but many had defences of their own. They could contain arrow loops and crenellations to help with the last-ditch defence of the castle. As the attacking soldiers gathered in the bailey, they would be vulnerable to arrow fire. Only plate armour stood any chance against the power of a crossbow bolt, so soldiers with chain mail would be in danger until the keep was breached. The keep would also contain the castle's stores, so in the event of a siege, the population were best placed to try to hold out for as long as possible. With the keep the only structure now occupied by the defenders, the

attackers could benefit from controlling the other buildings in the castle. The armoury could be pillaged for extra weapons and tools, and after the siege ended, stores could be raided and horses taken from stables to bolster the army for the next assault. The defence of the keep was always a last resort and usually meant victory for the aggressors.

Once the castle was taken, it was up to the attackers to decide the fate of the castle ruler; this depended on how merciless they were. When the enemies had all been dealt with, there was a choice to be made: rule the castle and make it the centre of a new occupied kingdom, or raze it to the ground and let the ruin stand as an example of what happens when a castle puts up resistance. Either way, the next siege is most likely not too far away. Pack up your trebuchets!





The phrase 'Arise, Sir...' was not actually used in the knighting ceremony



EVOLUTION OF THE KNIGHT

A knight was the ultimate Medieval warrior, the sharpest weapon a lord could thrust at his foes, and one of the most highly distinguished men in the king's court



he notion of a knight immediately conjures up strong images - King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, a chivalrous English gentleman who fights for honour, ladies swooning, and valiant one-on-one battles. However, this common image of the Medieval knight did not just spring up from nowhere; in actuality, the concept of knighthood existed way before Medieval Europe. It had been developing, growing and evolving since ancient times.

To truly see the origins of the knight we have to cast our gazes back to ancient Rome, and a class of people known as the equites. The equites were the second property-based class in ancient Rome, ranked just below the senatorial class, and named from the Latin for horse - *equus*. In Roman tradition, the three tribes of Rome each had 100 equites, and these mounted soldiers developed as an important part of the Roman army, being paid three times more than ordinary troops. They came to hold immense power as members of the voting assembly, and eventually did less fighting and were known for being powerful businessmen and landowners. Emperor Augustus removed the equestrian order away from the political world and back into the military. In order to join, men had to be free of birth, be in good health and character, and possess sufficient wealth. They also had to serve in subordinate military posts for a time. Being an eques was a desirable position, and there was a long waiting list of people eager to replace any

dismissed equites. By the 1st century CE, equites began to act more like modern civil servants, and they were employed as imperial agents in the provinces, and even had military authority in Egypt.

There have been many other soldiers throughout history who were mounted upon horses before the Middle Ages. The Ostrogoths, for instance, had a heavy reliance of cavalry, and those who could afford war horses in ancient Greece created cavalry units of their own. The late Roman and Byzantine Empire also had the bucellarii; these were not necessarily cavalry troops but, like Medieval knights, they were armies equipped and paid for by wealthy people. These elite fighters were better trained and equipped than regular soldiers, and became known as the military elite.

The Franks had the comitatus, who swore an oath of fealty to their leader. Unlike the rest of the troops, they would ride to battle, but usually dismounted to fight. However, by the Early Medieval Period, and the reign of Charlemagne, it became more common for these Frankish soldiers to remain on horseback to fight. This was aided and progressed with the development of the stirrup. Many traditions can be traced back to Charlemagne, such as the ancient ceremony where a young man would be presented with weapons, not dissimilar to the later knighthood ceremony where young noblemen would also be gifted with weapons upon being promoted to a knight.

Charlemagne's mounted warriors were very successful, helping him to win conquest after

✂ Middle Ages

conquest. He knew how important his elite troops were, so he gave them grants of land known as benefices to keep them on side and loyal to him alone. This had the effect of making this warrior class grow stronger and more powerful, even after his death, and fiefs were passed down from father to son.

This warrior class became very important after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. The central governments in Europe were weak, and the people were terrorised by not only local bandits, but also Viking sea-raiders and greedy, ambitious neighbours. If a village or city wanted to prevent itself being plundered and burned to the ground it needed protection that the government was not going to provide. Knowing full well the superiority of mounted-armoured warriors, young, able-bodied men were gathered to fend off the threats to the cities. For their services, these men were rewarded with war booty, but this developed into grants of lands so the men could make an income to support their expensive equipment, including horses, armour and weapons.

For England it was the invasion of William the Conqueror that brought these ideas to the country. Anglo-Saxons mainly fought on foot, with a few exceptions, so when the Normans invaded, they brought with them not only a new king, but a lot of the social, cultural and political practices that would soon develop into the noble, chivalric knightly lifestyle of the Medieval era.



One of England's most famous knights was Richard the Lionheart

The Medieval knight

Although there are some exceptions, in almost all instances knights were strongly associated with horses. The reasons knights were able to rise in prominence was because of how devastating a man on a horse would be. Some Medieval societies hadn't even seen horses before, so the spectre of a man riding these beasts was utterly terrifying. This is where many nations got their names for their knights from - French knights were chevaliers, Spanish knights were caballeros, Italian knights were cavalier, and Germans called their knights ritter. All these names come from the word for horse or ride. England, however, broke this rule. 'Knight' came from the Anglo-Saxon word 'cniht', which meant retainer or household servant. Though as the role of knights grew over the Middle Ages, English knights became far more than servants.

The typical English knight of the Middle Ages would pledge service, loyalty and protection to higher nobles or lieges in return for land and even food, lodging, armour, weapons, horses and, of course, money. The knight would generally hold their lands through their military duty, which usually lasted 40 days each year. Knights who had proved themselves capable in combat would be highly sought after and earn a higher price. Because of the prestige surrounding knights, they would also receive a position at the king's court.

In the earliest days of the knights, any man who could prove his proficiency in battle could become one, but this quickly changed. The land grants were passed from father to eldest son, and the knights became known as a landed class, with power far beyond being a sword for hire. Knights became influential figures, involved in social politics and closely connected to the most powerful people in the country. Into the 12th century, a distinction was made between these 'true knights' and non-noble cavalrymen who were known only as 'men-at-arms'. To be a knight didn't just mean fighting on a horse in a battle - it was a social rank that demanded power and respect.

The position of knight was highly desirable. It was a chance for lower-ranking nobles to climb the social ladder in a society with almost no upward momentum. It was rare, and very hard going, but if a man worked hard enough, he could prove himself worthy to become a knight by his bravery and fighting prowess on the battlefield. However, the most common way for a boy to become a knight was to be born into it. A son of a knight or royalty had an established path set out to become a knight. Aged eight, he was sent off to work as a page for the local lords. In this role he would learn the ways of the court, writing, music and

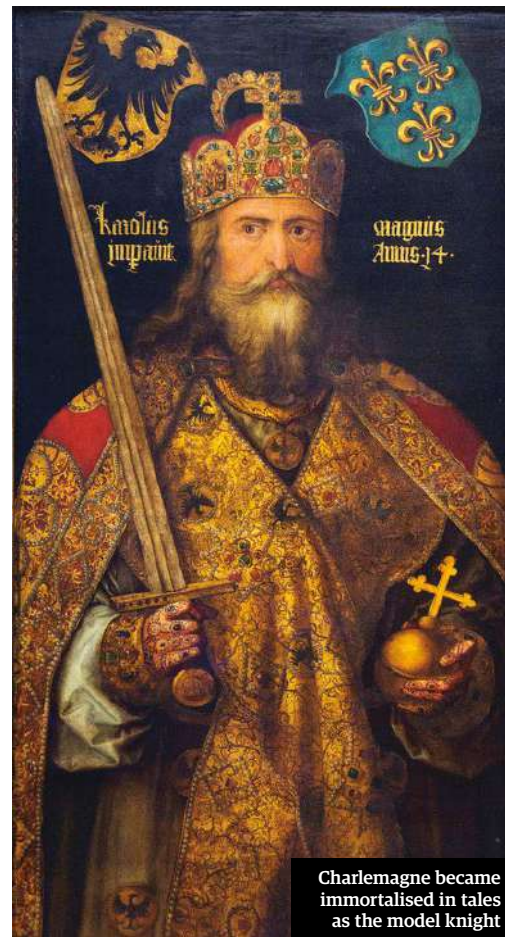
The position of knight was highly desirable - it was a chance for lower-ranking nobles to climb the social ladder

weapons. Then, aged 13, he would become a squire, where he would train with weapons, horse riding and combat skills. Once his training was complete, a squire would become a knight through a ceremony known as the accolade. Usually held during a big holiday, this knighting ceremony would include a ritual bath and prayer vigil, and would accumulate in the new knight swearing an oath. The knight would then be knighted with a tap of a sword on his shoulder.

The prestige of a knight

There was a very good reason nobles were scrambling over each other to become knights. They were the most feared and respected foe on the Medieval field. Mounted soldiers were the elite of the era due to their immense advantages in battle, and the ability to fight on horseback wasn't something just anyone could do. It took years of training to master, and an esteemed, fearful and respected reputation grew around these elite warriors. A line of mounted knights thrusting with polearms could easily smash through the defensive lines of any normal foot soldier.

Although knights were highly esteemed, several innovations in weaponry threatened their



Charlemagne became immortalised in tales as the model knight

"His tremendous victory at Verneuil was soon dubbed by contemporaries as the second Agincourt"

Support for the Knights Templar faded after the Holy Land was lost



supremacy. However, it was the ability of these knights to overcome these challenges that created such an invincible aura around them. When the longbow and crossbow were introduced in the 12th century, the shots could easily piece the chainmail worn by knights, but by the 13th century, knights had adopted plate armour, which protected them from these arrows. As the weapons improved, so did the armour, and as the Iron Age developed, weapons became more readily available, making the role of knights even more important in defense of their lords. By the 15th century, a knight in the field was completely encased in armour, making them almost helpless on foot, but a terrifying unstoppable machine when mounted.

With the knight unrivalled on the field, and a highly sought-after and respected social position, from the 15th to 17th century the idea of knighthood developed from the art of fighting to a code of conduct to be followed. It is this knights' code that is often romanticised in tales such as King Arthur and, for many, became far more appealing and important than their proficiency on the battlefield.

The chivalrous knight

It was the tales of European legends that first brought the idea of chivalry to the forefront of knighthood. Charlemagne's paladins were immortalised in songs of heroic exploits. Tales of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table were told over and over again through Medieval literature, and popularised the idea of the brave, chivalrous and noble knight. Another root cause of chivalry was the strong link that formed between Christianity and knighthood. This Christian warrior was emphasised in the Crusades, and the idea of knights being soldiers of Christ steadily grew.

This concept of a soldier of Christ was not a new invention of the Crusades, and actually had been brewing and developing for hundreds of years, starting in the 10th century in France. The Frankish society at the time was known for being brutal and violent, and when it collided with the Christian Church, this violence began to be regulated. Violence and fighting was seen as a profession, one that was passed down through generations. As the Christian church regulated this violence, a code was created for these horse-bound warriors, highly influencing the later code of conduct known as chivalry.

The actual code varied over time, but the main focus of the chivalrous knight was to dutifully serve his lord, and to protect his lands and his people. A knight was charged with looking after those who were weaker, and especially those of lesser rank, such as the poor and women. On the field, knights were expected to fight bravely and with military professionalism. This created an aura of respect around knights, and when they were taken as prisoners in battle, they were given comfortable lodgings and were well looked after when compared with common soldiers, who more often than not were killed. It is ironic that the knights' code of conduct did not extend to these archers and foot soldiers, as often they were seen as hindrances to knights being able to face other knights in combat, and treated as such.

Over time, this code of conduct in battle extended to the social realm. Knights were expected to be utterly respectable gentlemen in the courtly sphere too, with excellent knowledge of religion, writing, music and even law. This chivalrous code developed into other specific duties, which knights would engage in to demonstrate their abilities, such as attending

The evolution of armour

What exactly makes the infamous armour that has been attributed to the knight throughout history?

Although the most common image of a knight is a man clothed in full plate mail, this imposing figure was actually the accumulation of years of development of metalworking and blacksmithing.

As more efficient weapons were created to wound through a knight's armour, armour was built to withstand it. Chainmail was a knight's staple, but as crossbows were developed, smiths added pieces of plate in order to halt these arrows either on top of or beneath the chainmail suits. These were not full suits of armour, but just specific parts of the body were protected - such as elbow guards and

chest plates. Over time, more plate armour was developed, such as vambraces for the arms and grieves for the legs. By the 15th century, Medieval armour had developed into a full plate suit. Two schools of armour-making, the German and Italian, merged into the ultimate defensive suit - the Maximilian.

As the role of the knight himself expanded, so did his selection of armour. There was specific armour created for all of the knight's duties - field armour for battle; ceremonial armour, which focused on stunning elaborate details; and jousting armour designed specifically to help the knight excel in tournaments.



Armour would often replicate the fashion of the era, for example the pleated clothing of 16th-century Europe



Chivalry was also connected to the concept of courtly love

tournaments, hunting parties and jousting. Religion also continued to play a major part in the role of the knight, and over time the men were required to vow to use their weapons to protect the weak and defenseless, as well as strictly following the commands of the church. These Christian armies of knights would regard going off on a crusade as a religious duty, and back home they were expected to show religious values. This included not only their conduct on the battlefield, but also their conduct at court and in public functions.

Although these were the ideals of Medieval knights, the code of chivalry, like much of history, has been romanticised over the centuries through stories that twisted the truth. It wasn't until the later part of the Middle Ages that chivalry fully embedded itself in knightly culture. Throughout history there were many knights who were no more than bloodthirsty warriors, cruel, ruthless and out only for their own gain.

Knightly orders

As the prestige of knights grew, they began to form alliances outside of the normal knight/lord relationship. Usually taking on a religious and military nature, some of these organisations continue to intrigue people today. The first military order of knighthood was the Knights Hospitallers and the Holy Sepulchre, Catholic military orders formed during the First Crusade in 1099. Other similar groups sprang up over time, including the Teutonic Knights and the Knights Templars. The focus of these groups was to simply protect pilgrims journeying to the holy land, however, after successful Christian conquests these orders of knights became more important and powerful in the crusader states.



Lances were used in jousting tournaments, but were blunted to prevent major injury

More than a sword

Did the knight's weapon of choice make them what they were, or was the sword just an accessory?

In both myth and history, the knight has always been strongly associated with the sword. It's what they were knighted with on their shoulder, and in myth many knights' swords, such as a mystical Excalibur, were given their own names and special powers. Traditionally, the sword was regarded with honour, and mastering the use of it was considered to be the epitome of a knight's power. With the Iron Age, swords became longer, stronger and even more deadly. The handles of swords also grew longer, allowing for the knights to wield powerful two-handed weapons. There were even swords that were developed specifically to cut and thrust through armour.

However, the sword was not the only weapon at a knight's disposal. The use of maces in battle was popular in the Early Middle Ages, as not only were they easy to create, but they could be used to great devastation. Warhammers were also used to great effect, with the hammer end inflicting tremendous blows, and the pick penetrating a foe's armour. As blacksmithing developed, the use of polearm weapons in battle became very popular, such as the lance, spear and halberd. With far longer reach than swords, at anywhere from six to 12 feet in length, a polearm weapon could be used to dismount knights from their steeds, leaving them vulnerable in the field of battle.

The Knights Templar are by far the most famous organisation of knights in history, mainly due to the intrigue surrounding them. This is largely due to their progressive leaps forward in banking, which allowed them to become one of the wealthiest and most powerful organisations in the Medieval world. Stories around their rumoured treasures, fed by this mysterious and wealthy history, still persist today.

There were a host of other knightly organisations, and many of these did not emerge until the Late Middle Ages, for example the Knights of the Annunciation, a religious order of chivalry created in Italy. The Order of the Knights of the Holy Spirit, a French organisation that included the king ruling as grandmaster, and 100 knights serving beneath him. The Order of the Dragon, founded by members known as Draconists, rumoured to provide the inspiration for Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. A few other organisations claiming to be knightly still exist today, but of course these incorporate the more religious, chivalric values, and are not the military orders of the past. For example, the Knights of Columbus is a Catholic organisation that strives to upkeep knightly values, such as charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism. The British Order of the Garter was formed in the mid-14th century and still exists today. Although membership is limited to the sovereign, prince of Wales and 24 select numbers. The order also includes a number of knights and ladies. Today it stands as the oldest order of knighthood in

existence and one of the highest honours of the British honours system.

Ultimately, although the days of knights riding, fully plated, on a horse are certainly over, for many the concept of chivalry, and the prestige of holding the title of knighthood, still survives strong today, whether in the form of the fairytale knight's chivalrous behaviour, or the titles and prestige bestowed by monarchs even now.

The tales of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table romanticised the chivalric nature of knights



Maintaining a knight's equipment, including armour and weaponry were expensive, time consuming but essential tasks.



The use of knights decreased as countries found it cheaper to maintain professional armies, or use mercenaries as and when conflicts arose

The code of chivalry

What rules were the knights sworn to live by?

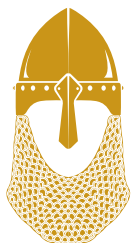
When speaking about knightly chivalry, the 'chivalric code' is often referenced. This was not an actual document with set rules for knights to follow, but rather a social code that knights were expected to uphold. However, a code of chivalry was documented in epic poem *The Song of Roland*, written between 1089 and 1100, and gives a good basis for how a chivalrous knight was expected to behave. For example, the poem says that a knight was expected to:

- Uphold the church
- Protect the weak, especially widows and orphans
- Live with honour and glory
- Obey authority
- Protect the honour of fellow knights
- Refrain from deceit, unfairness and meanness
- Always speak the truth
- Never give up
- Respect the honour of women
- Never back down from a challenge from an equal
- Never turn his back upon a foe

It is interesting to note that the majority of the entries relate to moral chivalrous acts, rather than acts of combat, indicating that it was even more important to be chivalrous beyond the battlefield than on it.



Chivalric tales usually depicted women as obedient, helpless maids in need of protection



THE NORMAN CONQUESTS

The Normans didn't just conquer England. These ex-Vikings carved out kingdoms and principalities through Europe and beyond



he king, Charles the Simple, lord of the Franks, stood waiting. Before him, the nominated Northman hesitated. What was he waiting for? It was all

straightforward. The king had signed a treaty with the Northmen, ceding them the territory north of the River Epte to the coast, in return for their allegiance and conversion to Christianity. He had stood godfather to Rollo, the leader of the Northmen, at his baptism, and received his pledge of loyalty by taking the Northman's hands in his own. Now, to really underline who was in charge, one of the Northmen just had to kiss the king's foot. So why was he hesitating?

But before Charles could turn to his bishops, who had suggested the foot-kissing, to ask about the delay, the Northman, one of Rollo's chief warriors, finally bent down. Put instead of putting his lips to the king's foot, he grasped the foot and raised it, forcefully, up to his face. Taken by surprise, the king toppled over backwards.

This was in 911. Having raided extensively in France and Britain, Rollo and his band of Vikings settled around Rouen in the lower reaches of the River Seine, sea raiders turned land wardens through signing the Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte.

By 933, the Northmen, or Normans, had expanded the territory under their control to encompass almost all of the historic territory of the Duchy of Normandy. The Northmen had quickly abandoned their previous language, Old Norse, learning French, and just as quickly they forswore their old pagan gods, becoming devout and determined Christians.

But while the Normans had adopted some key aspects of Frankish civilisation, they retained many

characteristics from their days as sea raiders, most notably restlessness and tactical cunning. But this amalgamation of Christian and Viking cultures produced something new: a reckless courage that often enabled them to face and defeat enemies who had apparently overwhelming numerical superiority. For the pagan Vikings, raiding and conquest was a matter of business: unless victory was practically certain they preferred to withdraw and fight again another day. But the Normans, fired by

a new faith, really believed that by courage and daring, and with God's aid, they could overcome any odds. So they set out to do so.

In this they were greatly aided by their facility in adopting the military practices of the Franks. Once sea raiders, the Normans quickly became the most skilled knights in Europe, training their sons in the art of cavalry warfare from a young age. Having

The Normans adopted Christianity with gusto, becoming a key force in the Crusades and building iconic churches





Abolitionist Normans

Anglo-Saxon England was famous for two exports above everything else: hunting dogs and slaves. Slavery was deeply embedded in Anglo-Saxon society, with at least ten per cent and maybe as much as 30 per cent of the population enslaved. The Anglo-Norman chronicler, William of Malmesbury, noted how slave traders would buy up people throughout England then export them. But William was writing about something that had ceased. By his time, some 60 years after the Conquest, the Norman kings had outlawed slavery. Historians, a sceptical bunch, used to think that the Normans ceased using slaves because rent-paying tenants were more profitable. But while that might have accounted for agricultural slaves, many female slaves were taken and kept as concubines. Moreover, England, with a vibrant economy and currency, continued the practice. It seems that the Normans abandoned slavery because of the moral scruples of their churchmen, who were in the vanguard of a great reform movement in the Church, and their ability to convince the nobility that slave taking and slave trading was wrong. Lanfranc, the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1070 onwards, was vociferous in his condemnation of slavery and William, Lanfranc's pupil as a little boy, complied. The ban was not immediately effective – a Church council condemned slavery in 1102 – but by the time William of Malmesbury wrote in the 1120s, slavery had effectively ceased in England.



Excavated manacles showing the chains Vikings used to restrain people taken to be sold as slaves



King John inherited property including England, Normandy, and parts of Ireland and France, then lost almost all of it

learned to move quickly and strike fast, the Normans adopted and refined the art of castle building, starting with the simple and portable motte and bailey that could be thrown up quickly in newly conquered territory, through to the great stone keeps that enabled them to dominate these territories despite being greatly outnumbered.

Pilgrimage united the Norman love of adventure, their restlessness and their religious fervour. Many set out on the perilous journey to the Holy Land, which was still in Muslim hands and a dangerous place to visit, stopping off en route in southern Italy. There, in the early decades of the 11th century, Norman mercenaries were recruited to fight

both for and against the Byzantines, leading to the creation of the first Norman dukedoms and principalities outside of France.

Tancred de Hauteville (980-1041), a minor Norman noble, would have been forgotten by history if not for his children: he produced 12 sons with two wives, many of whom left Normandy for the Mediterranean. William, Drogo and Humphrey, sons from Tancred's first marriage, sailed to the Mezzogiorno around 1035, enlisting as mercenaries fighting for the Byzantines against the Arabs. After killing the emir of Syracuse in single combat, William got the nickname 'Iron Arm' and became the leader of the Normans in southern Italy, being

Timeline

DEFINING MOMENT

Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte 911

Charles the Simple decided to deal with the problem of Viking raiders by giving the raiders who had established a camp on the lower reaches of the Seine title to the land in return for their swearing allegiance to him, converting to Christianity, and their acting as wardens to prevent other Vikings sailing up the Seine to raid Paris. In return, the Vikings, led by their chief, Rollo, received the land between the River Epte and the coast. Rollo, now Count of Rouen, expanded the territory under his control and by 933 the Duchy of Normandy was established.

1002

● Marrying up

Emma, sister to the Duke of Normandy, married Æthelred, the king of England, bearing him two sons, and fatefully linking the English crown to the Dukes of Normandy.

1017

● Normans head south

The first Norman knights arrived in southern Italy on pilgrimage. They found a fractured political situation that welcomed effective mercenaries, so they stayed and gradually began to establish themselves there.

1066

● The other conquest

The most famous date in English history led to the death of the last Anglo-Saxon king of England, the wholesale replacement of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy by Normans and their allies, and the devastation and depopulation of much of the north, as William savagely repressed rebellions.

1098

● Crusade

Many Normans answered the pope's call for a crusade to take back the Holy Land. Among the crusaders was Bohemund, great-grandson of Tancred, whose sons had established the kingdom of Sicily. Bohemund became the ruler of the principality of Antioch.

DEFINING MOMENT

Sicily 1061

Five years before their duke in Normandy ventured across the English Channel, Robert Guiscard and his younger brother Roger sailed across the Straits of Messina and landed in Sicily, taking the strategically vital city of Messina, which commands the straits, unopposed after Roger took the garrison by surprise. Palermo fell ten years later and by 1085 they had the island under their control. It was an extraordinary achievement that highlighted the particular Norman combination of daring, cunning and determination. But it was their conduct as rulers that marked Robert and, especially, Roger as exceptional: they welded a disparate and often antagonistic population into a brilliant new culture.

proclaimed count of Apulia in 1042. Sending word back to their younger brothers in Normandy, the Hautevilles in the Mediterranean were joined by Robert, nicknamed Guiscard (which translates as 'the resourceful' or the less complimentary 'fox' or 'weasel') in 1047 and their youngest brother, Roger, in 1057. The two younger brothers conquered Calabria by 1060.

In Rome, the attitude of Pope Leo IX had swung from welcoming these potential allies against the Byzantines to fearing them, then to accommodating them at arm's length in the hope that their taste for conquest could be directed elsewhere. And just across the Straits of Messina, in Muslim-controlled Sicily, there was the ideal target. So in 1061, Robert and Roger de Hauteville began the first Norman conquest of a large island. It took them 30 years to gain complete control of Sicily; the fortunes of war did not always run according to plan. But with Sicily taken, the brothers proved wise and skilful rulers. Robert took southern Italy, while Roger became the first Count of Sicily. In Sicily, Roger declared Arabic an official language alongside Latin, Greek and Norman French, and recruited Muslim and Greek administrators to help govern the island. Under Roger and his son, Roger II, a unique Norman-Byzantine-Arab culture developed and flourished, producing architectural masterpieces such as the Cappella Palatina in Palermo and Monreale Cathedral, as well as fostering translations of Classical works from Greek into Latin and developing and improving the agricultural techniques brought by the Arabs to Sicily. The island became a byword for good administration and brilliant culture.

From Sicily, the Normans established bases along the coast of north Africa, putting garrisons into major towns from 1146 onwards although their presence there was short-lived, coming to an end in 1180. Normans also served as mercenaries for the emperors of Byzantium, while Bohemund, one of

Warrior countess

Among the contending powers in southern Italy were the Lombards. To bring them onside, Robert Guiscard contracted marriage with Sikelgaita, the daughter of the Prince of Salerno, putting aside his previous wife to do so. It proved a splendid match. Sikelgaita was a remarkable woman, who had already studied at the medical school in Salerno, which was pioneering the treatment of illness as something to be diagnosed and cured, and according to the chroniclers she was as remarkable for her size and strength as for her learning. Once married, Sikelgaita took part in military campaigns - Robert trusted her to conduct the siege of Trani - and was one of his most trusted councillors. At the Battle of Dyrrachium in 1081, Sikelgaita took to the field in full armour and rallied the Norman troops when they were retreating in disarray, upbraiding them for their cowardice before taking a spear and leading them back to the battle. She bore Robert eight children. Following Robert's death in 1085, Sikelgaita was dowager duchess of their domains until her own death in 1090.



Sikelgaita, the remarkable Lombard princess, with her equally remarkable husband, Robert Guiscard

the leaders of the First Crusade (1095-1099), was the great grandson of that minor Norman noble, Tancred de Hauteville, who had sent his sons south fifty years earlier. Bohemund became Prince of Antioch, one of the Crusader states and the most easterly of the Norman conquests. But the Normans expanded in other directions too.

After their famous conquest of England in 1066, the most obvious direction was west, into Wales. William installed some of his most powerful barons on the borderlands of the Marches, and gifted them great local power and almost complete autonomy. The Marcher lords became a power in their own right, and a threat to the English crown for the next few centuries, with Roger Mortimer even deposing Edward II in 1326 and becoming the ruler of England in all but name for three years. However, the Welsh threw back the initial Norman invasion and retained their independence until Edward I's conquest two centuries later.

Within the British Isles, the greatest area of Norman influence, after England, was Ireland. Norman forces first landed in Ireland in May 1169, called to act as mercenaries for the king of Leinster. More Normans arrived in 1170, most notably Richard de Clare, 'Strongbow'. While the invasion proved militarily successful, bringing Ireland into the Angevin Empire, the Anglo-Normans who arrived in Ireland, after initially settling in ethnic enclaves called 'the Pale' in the east of the country (hence the expression 'beyond the pale'), married and merged into Irish culture, eventually becoming as committed to the country as the native Gaels. Norman influence in Ireland can be traced through the many surnames having Norman roots, including all those with the prefix 'Fitz', Barry, Burke, D'Arcy, Treacy and Lacy. What had started out as a roving group of Viking raiders and pillagers had come a long way, and forever altered the history of Europe and the wider world.

DEFINING MOMENT

Shipwreck 25 November 1120

King Henry I set out from Normandy for England. Among the flotilla of vessels was the White Ship, carrying Henry's only legitimate son, William. Soon after it set sail, the White Ship hit a rock and sank, drowning all but one aboard. With only his daughter, Matilda, left to him, Henry made her his heir and arranged her marriage to Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou. But when Henry died in 1135, many of his English barons refused to accept Matilda as their ruler, taking Stephen of Blois, Henry's nephew, as king. This began 20 years of civil war, known as the Anarchy.

DEFINING MOMENT

Fall of Normandy 1204

From his father, Henry II, and his brother, Richard the Lionheart, King John inherited possessions that included England, Normandy, half of Ireland, Anjou and Aquitaine - a veritable empire. But possessing neither the political flair of his father nor the ferocious military skill of his brother, but with a surfeit of Plantagenet vices, John proceeded to lose almost all of it to King Philip Augustus of France. By 1204, even Normandy was gone.

May 1169

● Invasion of Ireland

The first Norman mercenaries arrived in Ireland to support the deposed king of Leinster. In 1171, Richard de Clare, 'Strongbow', arrived, followed six months later by King Henry II. The long English involvement in Ireland had begun.

1174

● Beauty in stone

In Sicily, King William II commissioned the building of the great cathedral in Monreale. The church blended Norman, Byzantine and Muslim architectural styles into a dazzling synthesis.

1191

● Conquest of Cyprus

Almost by accident, while on his way to the Holy Land as part of the Third Crusade, Richard the Lionheart conquered Cyprus, establishing Anglo-Norman rule on the island that ensured the island remained in Christian hands for centuries afterwards.

1194

● Loss of Sicily

The last Norman ruler of Sicily, William II, died childless, leaving the kingdom to his aunt, Constance, wife of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI. A rebellion by other claimants was suppressed and in 1194 the Kingdom of Sicily passed into the rulership of the House of Hohenstaufen.

THE DOMESDAY BOOK

Timeline

A circular inset map of Europe showing major cities and transportation routes. The map is color-coded with green for land and blue for water. Major cities are labeled in black text, and a network of lines represents transportation routes. The map is framed by a white border.

A circular portrait of a crowned figure, likely a monarch, wearing a green and gold robe and holding a scepter. The figure has a fair complexion and is set against a blue background with white floral patterns. The portrait is enclosed in a white circular frame.

68



What was it?

The *Domesday Book* comprises 913 pages and over two million words of Latin. It was the first comprehensive record of the landholdings in England and Wales, and the most ambitious survey in the whole of Europe at the time. It is organised according to the hierarchy of each landowner, starting first with the king himself, and then listing the lords of each 'hundred', and then individual manors. For each landowner, the *Domesday Book* states the amount and type of land he holds, and the number of free men and slaves available to work it.

The *Domesday Book* is really two books: *Little Domesday* covers Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, even down to the numbers of livestock. *Great Domesday* was compiled afterwards to cover the rest of the country, but in less detail. *Domesday* lists 13,418 places but there are some big omissions. London, Winchester, Bristol and County Durham are not included, because they had the right to raise their own taxes and so didn't directly contribute to the wealth of the royal treasury.



Why did it happen?

In 1085, William's grip on his new kingdom was very weak. As well as rebellions from within, the country was threatened with invasion from Denmark. To defend, William needed money to pay for mercenary soldiers and that money could only come from taxation. William sent out surveyors on seven separate circuits of the country, stopping at each manor to assess the land controlled by the lord there. At each place, the surveyors asked how much revenue the land could produce; before the Norman conquest, at the time of the conquest and now. William wanted to know how much he could tax each estate, and whether they might be squeezed still further in the future. Since the *Domesday Book* would be used as the definitive record of ownership, some nobles exaggerated the size of their estate. The surveyors tried to prevent this by using juries of both Norman nobles and Saxon peasants to check the figures.



Who was involved?



WILLIAM I

c.1028-9 September 1087

William commissioned a survey of the land he had conquered, to make sure no one was avoiding their taxes.



ROBERT, COUNT OF MORTAIN

c.1031-1090

William's half brother. The *Domesday* records show that he was the largest landowner in England after the king.



WILLIAM RUFUS

c.1056-2 August 1100

Third son of William I, and England's second Norman king. He turned the *Domesday* survey into the *Domesday* books.



This bridge over the river Ouse in Sussex still lists the fees from an earlier toll gate that dates back to the *Domesday* survey

LIST OF TOLLS

	s	d
Carriage & Horses	1	0
4 Wheels & 1 Horse	9	
2 Ditto	6	
Waggon & Horses	1	6
Motor Cars	1	0
Steam Engines	2	0
Motor & Side-Cars	3	

15 MARCH 1783

2006

ARCHIEP C. ACHTARE Lanfranc ten in du. f. p. quat. x. hid. 7 modo p. xx. car. In dno funt. 1111. cat. xxxiii. cat. lbi reela. 7 un mol de. ec. pora. de tra huj ad ten Reftald vii. hid unde hnt. vii. lib 7 viii. fol. T.R.E 7 poll. val. xi. 3x. lib 7.

The first printed copy of the book is made for Parliament, using a special font to mimic the handwriting of the original.



Domesday goes online with an English translation for the first time. You can search the records for free and see the original pages at opendomesday.org.

The Crusades in THE HOLY LAND

Religious tensions and territorial struggles spilled over into a series of wars for possession of the sacred city of Jerusalem and its surrounding area

It was a beguiling promise. Go on crusade, and your sins will be forgiven. On your death, you'll ascend straight to Heaven. There were other, more earthly rewards too. Land and loot.

Social and political power. Adventure and renown. Take the Cross, and all of this - fame, fortune, and forgiveness - could be yours.

Christian pilgrims had been visiting the Holy Land for centuries, but in 1095 these journeys changed from peaceful pilgrimages to full-blown holy war. Tensions between Christendom and Islam were high, and when the Byzantine emperor Alexios I, beset by an army of Seljuk Turks, begged Pope Urban II for help, the pontiff declared the First Crusade and mobilised an army of Christian volunteers to relieve the siege of Constantinople and then move on Jerusalem, with the intent of making the sacred city the heart of a Christian kingdom of God. It did not go according to plan. The crusaders eventually succeeded in capturing both cities, but in the process they cemented a reputation for barbarity, infighting, disorganisation, and profiteering that has dogged relations between Christianity, Judaism and Islam ever since.

The European conquest of the lands around Jerusalem - the 'Crusader States' - continued to

inflame tensions. Eight further main Crusades, and countless smaller ones, would follow as the tides of victory ebbed and flowed. The Second Crusade saw the founding of the Knights Templar, the Third gave the Muslim forces their brilliant leader Saladin, who contested against England's iconic king Richard the Lionheart. The Fourth resulted in the Sack of Constantinople, the Byzantine capital whose tribulations had set the Crusades in motion. In the Fifth, Hungary and Austria took advantage of the Mongol Empire's threats to Europe's Asian borders to launch an ill-fated land grab in Egypt while other nations were distracted. The Sixth was a desultory reconquest of Jerusalem by the Sicilian-Norman Frederick II, characterised more by its political manoeuvring than deeds of arms. The Seventh, Eighth and Ninth were mainly prosecuted by the devout French king, Louis IX, and his vassals, with occasional assistance from largely uninterested allies.

The territorial gains of the Crusades didn't last. With their sins forgiven, their reputations made and their pockets full, crusaders had a tendency to turn for home, rather than rebuild the regions they'd destroyed with their holy wars.



Women also took the Cross, including the French and English queen Eleanor of Aquitaine

The Crusades in the Holy Land



A battle scene involving crusaders on the walls of Jerusalem by Claude Jacquand, 1846



The birth of MAGNA CARTA

In the time that Bad King John would earn his infamous moniker, a band of nobles would force a wayward monarch to finally respect the needs of the realm



By the time the First Barons' War erupted, the landscape of royal authority had changed. The actions of the unco-operative King John I would push his most privileged nobles to revolt against him and demand the monarch be contractually obliged to serve his people as they had served him. It was ultimately a disagreement between selfish men – a monarch who needed coin to rebuild the realm and win an unwinnable fight, and a group of barons who wished to protect their own coffers from royal fingers – but it was the first attempt to make a king legally bound to follow the rules. These were the seeds of British parliamentary democracy, sown in the early years of the 13th century.

The origins of *Magna Carta* begin with the actions of the third Plantagenet king, John I. Even before his royal ascension, John was already a controversial figure. While his elder brother, Richard the Lionheart, was characteristically absent

from the realm during the Third Crusade in 1191, John attempted to unseat his sibling by forming a secret alliance with French king Philip II. The coup failed, and Richard forgave him, but it proved John was a calculating figure who was willing to cause friction to get his way, an attribute that calcified following his coronation in 1199.

John's desire to restructure the realm came to blows with the kingdom his warmongering brother had left behind. When he wasn't seeking glory in the Holy Land, Richard resided in France, visiting England only when official occasions demanded it. This absence had helped the barons, the highest and most influential tier of the English nobility, to grow richer and more powerful, and it was here that John found the most resistance to his rule.

That resistance would be made all the worse by his relationship with both France and the Church. While John had managed to exert English control over both Scotland and the rebellious state that was Ireland, France was another matter. England's control over the heavily fortified region



Magna Carta formed a defining chapter of King John's reign, but it's never mentioned or referenced in Shakespeare's play about him.

"They formed a contract that held the king accountable for the first time in the history of the English throne"

of Normandy - and John's desire to focus his attention on the minutiae of governing his own kingdom - led to the Treaty of Le Goulet in May 1200, which saw Philip accept John's inherited ownership of his late brother's French lands in exchange for John's recognition of Philip as overlord in his stead. The decision weakened England in the eyes of barons and earned John the rather unseemly moniker of 'Softsword'.

History presents John as a king who desired order and control above all else - and that desire led him to clash with almost every other form of authority in the land. His desire to limit the influence of Rome in English affairs saw him excommunicated in June 1209, which only served to distance him from the disenfranchised nobility around him. By 1213, John was forced to recognise papal authority once again, but his relationship with Rome was irrevocably damaged, with Pope Innocent III even proclaiming that anyone who chose to overthrow the king would be lawfully entitled to do so.

John's reign descended into further turmoil when the anti-French nobles he'd formed alliances

with rebelled against him. John had been forced to take action to reclaim Normandy for the English throne, but the campaign was costly and ended with John's forces being crushed at the Battle of Bouvines in 1214. John had lost his most significant territory on the continent, exhausted what coin he'd managed to reinvest into the economy, and fractured his royal authority beyond repair.

There was blood in the water upon John's return to England, and the barons were already circling. John's means of funding his ill-fated campaign in France, an aggressive form of taxation upon the rich resources of the nobility, had left a sour taste in the collective mouths of England's richest class. A wound that festered all the more with John's intrusive form of governance - prickly and intransigent, the king's desire to oversee every facet of his realm

had forced the nobility to conceal and protect their affairs. The barons had had enough - the king was a force accountable only to himself and something had to be done.

Supported by Philip, the barons rebelled against John and his ever-more rapacious taxation policies,

with those in the north and north-east of England rallying to the call to revolt. With John's public profile in tatters, more and more disenfranchised nobles joined the cause, and in April 1215, the forces of the rebels began heading south. By May, the rebels had renounced all fealty to John and marched on London. John was secretly attempting to gain support from Rome, announcing his desire to lead a crusade to the Holy Land. However, it was all in vain as the rebelling barons took London and forced the king to flee.

So John, knowing a civil war was simply untenable, met with the heads of the revolt at the water-meadow of Runnymede, 20 miles from the centre of the capital. It was here the rebels presented their legal expectations to the crown, formed into a document known as the *Articles of the Barons*. It was in this manuscript that the principles of *Magna Carta* were forged. Divided into two sections, the *Articles* did not represent a one-sided demand but the end result of weeks of negotiations between the king and the barons.

The first section was divided into 48 paragraphs, setting out the individual clauses to which the

Magna Carta was written on parchment in Latin, with many words abbreviated in order to save on space

DEFINING MOMENT

Coronation of King John 1199

Despite attempting to take the throne via a coup during Richard I's involvement in the Third Crusade, John eventually becomes king of England in 1199. He began one of the most tumultuous rules in English history. A constant battle with the pope and a series of threats to his position as king weakened him, while his bellicose approach to taxation forced his nobility to rebel, leading to the first stirrings of parliamentary democracy on English soil.

DEFINING MOMENT

King John signs Magna Carta 1215

By signing *Magna Carta*, John effectively diminishes the power of the Crown in its own realm and sows the seeds for democracy in England. John disagrees with almost every clause of *Magna Carta*, including the fact he could no longer demand money from the nobility, that every freeman had the right to a fair trial and that the church should have an executive vote in the running of the country. John hates the document, and even has it briefly destroyed, but the impact of his agreement has already spread like wildfire.



This fresco, which was painted in 1900, shows King John meeting with the rebel barons to eventually sign *Magna Carta* into law

Timeline

1214

Innocent III assumes papal control

Pope Innocent III bans priests from administering most of the sacraments then excommunicates John in 1209. Five years later, he resumes papal influence.

21 April 1214



1215

Barons' Revolt takes Tower of London

Heavy taxation and bizarre legislation force a band of barons to defy the king, spiralling into a full-on revolt. This movement leads them to take the Tower of London.

17 May 1215

1215

Meeting at Runnymede

Realising he can't defeat the Barons' Revolt by force, John is forced to meet the rebels at Runnymede to discuss their demands in the *Articles of the Barons*.

10 June 1215



1215

Peace restored in England

While the king attempts to play down the importance of *Magna Carta*, the damage is already done. With the barons re-swearing allegiance to the Crown, peace is effectively restored.

19 June 1215

1215

Magna Carta begins to spread

The first seven copies of the lengthy *Magna Carta* document are finished and sent around the realm to ensure the treaties John has agreed to are seen and known by the English people.

24 June 1215



King John's aggressive taxation of the nobility proved a step too far for the barons and ultimately led to his political downfall

rebels had forced the king to concede. It stated that the customs and liberties granted by the king should be granted in turn to all landowners, thus extending the terms of the charter to the entire realm. These clauses were more of an informal legislation - the request that all freemen be granted a fair trial by their peers being far too complicated a matter to settle overnight - but they nevertheless formed a contract that held the king accountable for the first time in the history of the English throne.

The second section of the *Articles* represented a security clause to protect the document, with 25 unnamed barons acting as guarantors of sorts. It's here we find the very first evidence for the creation of a baronial committee to ensure the demands of the *Articles* were adhered to by the king. The document also contained a

clause enabling the archbishop of Canterbury and his fellow bishops to issue their own charters, thus preventing John from seeking papal annulment. With the king's Seal affixed to the bottom, the time had come to formalise this into a document that would be distributed around the realm as proof of the king's assent: *Magna Carta*.

Magna Carta, rewritten by hand into seven initial copies and resealed by the king, was carried across the realm, signalling the beginning of a new age for England. In the centuries to come it would help

form a progressive step forwards for the English statute of law, but initially it was largely impossible to enforce. Those 25 barons and the king distrusted each other intensely, and with the pressure of Clause 61 - which stated the king's castles and lands could be confiscated if he failed to meet the conditions of the charter - hanging heavy on John's shoulders, further conflict was inevitable.

By 15 August, the rebels refused to vacate London as part of the peace deal agreed with the king. And with an official decree from the pope arriving a few months later, England was thrown into the First Barons' War. The anti-royalist barons then reached out to the son of Philip II, Louis VIII, offering to support his own claim to the English throne in support for military aid. The war raged well into 1216, with John's health eventually failing

due to dysentery on 19 October.

While the men involved in its creation became blinded by distrust and greed, *Magna Carta* itself survived. Revised to welcome John's son and heir, Henry III, to the throne in 1217, the landmark document finally began to have a tangible effect. Not every clause would be followed, and many would be cannibalised on their way into English law, but its roots in the desire for an accountable leader would reverberate all the way to the English Civil War in the 1600s and beyond.

Magna Carta is an extensive document. A modern English translation runs to a total of 4,922 words

The birth of Magna Carta



Magna Carta was a triumph for the people of the realm, and this tribute, installed in 2015, stands as a testament to that legacy

The legacy of Magna Carta on Medieval law

While it took almost a century for the fundamental legal ramifications of *Magna Carta* to be felt in the life of an English everyman (mainly because it was written to make the king accountable for breaches of the law), that didn't mean the document wasn't influential. Even as a symbolic document, *Magna Carta* sent ripples across the surface of Medieval legislation in a way no other legal charter had ever managed before.

As the Great Charters were steadily revised and introduced, the people of the realm found new legal precedents that changed the landscape of how Medieval law was enacted. For instance, those who believed a sheriff was in breach of their role as a representative of the Crown could cite *Magna Carta*, since these individuals were meant to officially propagate the rule of the king throughout the land. By 1350, half of the clauses in *Magna Carta* were no longer valid in English law, but the fact these points of legislation even existed in the first place provided a legal foundation that ensured further refinements could be made in the future. Principles such as the right to a fair trial by one's peers may have taken centuries to come into effect, but the fact a king agreed to honour such a principle was truly symbolic.

DEFINING MOMENT

Edward I confirms Magna Carta 1297

In 1297, King Edward I was in desperate need of funds, but he was unable to force money out of the nobility lest he suffer a similar fate to his forebear King John. In order to lawfully enact a new tax and keep his nobles on-side, the king is forced to royally reaffirm *Magna Carta* and its previous revisions. It is this version that remains in the British statute of law to this day, although it should be noted that a number of clauses were repealed by Edward and subsequent kings as England began to transition into a military powerhouse.

1215

● Pope annuls Magna Carta

Magna Carta was far from safe, and with John choosing to submit entirely to Rome, Pope Innocent III signs a papal bull that deems the document null and void.
24 August 1215

1216

● King John dies

Despite Rome's attempts to curtail the document, Magna Carta becomes popular among the people. 14 months after it was first signed, John dies at the age of 49.
18 October 1216



1216

● First revision of Magna Carta

The late King John's body is barely cold before the first revision of Magna Carta, under the supervision of the Earl of Pembroke (the new regent), is released.
12 November 1216

1217

● Second revision of Magna Carta

Almost a year to the day since the first, a second revision of the document is made official, seeing changes made to taxation and the protection of the people's civil liberties.
6 November 1217

1225

● Henry III reissues Magna Carta

By the time that Henry III comes of age and assumes the throne, Magna Carta has been officially integrated into the English statute of law.
11 February 1225



© Alamy



Invading EASTERN EUROPE

*The Mongol gaze turns westward, ushering
in an era of conquest and territorial expansion*



By 1220 the Mongols had been successfully campaigning throughout a panic-stricken China for 15 years and the soon-to-be conquered Khwarezmian Empire in the Middle East. Treasures, territories and slaves had fallen into their skilled hands ever since the first wave of riders poured across the boundaries of the Mongol Empire beneath the banner

of Genghis Khan. Yet for such an insatiable invasion force, even the promise of all of China was never going to be enough. It therefore came as no surprise to the terrified masses of Europe when the Mongols turned their avaricious gaze westward. A swath of relentless incursions loomed as the world entered the second decade of the 13th century, and in time these blood-soaked lands would coin a name for the hordes: 'Tartars', derived from the Latin for 'hell'.



The Kievan Rus' Prince Michael stands in the court of Batu Khan

CONQUERING THE 'RUS' LANDS

Mongol invaders returned to the Rus' Lands in 1237, mounting a ruthless campaign against the principalities

Before the first Mongol incursion into the Rus' Lands in 1221, Köten, a chieftain of the nomadic Kipchak peoples in the region of the Dnieper River, warned his son-in-law Mstislav of Galich, a Kievan ruler, "Today they will slaughter us. Tomorrow they will come for you." His words would prove to be hauntingly prophetic.

In 1235, Ögedei Khan unleashed a Mongol army under Batu Khan to wage a western campaign to subjugate Central Asia and Europe. Within two years the Mongols again reached the Rus' Lands. During their advance, the city of Bilär in Volga Bulgaria was besieged for 45 days in 1236 and then utterly destroyed. By the winter of 1237, the Mongols were poised to assault the Russian principalities across the natural barrier of the River Volga. Batu divided his army, with part of his forces placed under the command of Subutai, who led them in the

seizure of the city of Ryazan on the great river in December, the population of which was massacred in a horrendous killing spree.

Exploiting the inability of the Kievan Rus' princes to coalesce against the grave danger, Subutai proceeded to besiege Vladimir, the capital city of the Rostov-Suzdal Principality, which fell in a few weeks. Meanwhile, Batu advanced to Novgorod. In 1240, victory followed victory, and Kiev fell in December, its people massacred as the ruling duke fled to Hungary.

By the end of 1241 Batu had conquered the Rus' Lands, what is today essentially northern Ukraine and western Russia. The conquest of the Rus' Lands provided a springboard for further advances into Eastern Europe. On the heels of his military successes, Batu established the Golden Horde, which would come to dominate the region for the next 250 years.

Assault on Poland

Intended as a small incursion, the invasion of Poland produced dazzling results

With a conquering wind at their backs, the Mongols under Batu and Subutai were poised to unleash their avalanche of military might on Eastern Europe by early 1241.

Subutai devised an offensive to secure the flanks of the invasion and strike deep into the heart of Europe. With 130,000 men, he proposed sending 20,000 under Baidar and Kadan, cousins of Batu, into Poland. Their shield would protect the remaining Mongol forces invading Hungary from a counterstroke out of the north. Remarkably, the Europeans were oblivious to the looming threat, and the Mongols realised that a winter campaign would enhance the element of surprise.

Moving northwest into Poland, the Mongol army divided after crossing the River Vistula. While Kadan advanced on Mazovia, Baidar struck the city of Kraków, which fell into his hands like a ripe plum. Prince Bolesław the Chaste abandoned the city, and Baidar swept in, his soldiers killing and looting with gusto while burning the heart of the city.

Vladimir, commanding the Polish army tasked with defending Kraków, was lured from his defences, chasing an enemy he believed to be in retreat only to ride straight into a trap set at the village of Chmielnik, where the Poles were slaughtered. Baidar then besieged Breslau but abandoned the effort when word arrived that Duke Henry of Silesia had raised 30,000 men, among them Teutonic Knights and troops under Polish barons. King Wenceslaus I of Bohemia was en route with more men to join Henry, who was only 60 kilometres from the Mongols.

The Mongols rode swiftly to Liegnitz, their adversary's rendezvous point. They reached the town in southwest Poland hours ahead of the king and attacked Henry's army on 9 April 1241. Using their famed false retreat tactic, the Mongols turned on their opponents, deploying smoke to obscure their own movements, and wiped out Henry's force. The Duke was killed, his head severed and displayed on a pole.

Unrelenting, Baidar and Kadan harassed Wenceslaus as he turned back to Bohemia. Having accomplished their mission, they subsequently pillaged their way towards Hungary to rejoin Subutai and Batu. Before the end of the 13th century the Mongols would invade Poland twice more.



Mongols overwhelm European forces at the Battle of Liegnitz



This mural depicts trade and commerce along the great Silk Road

THE SUBJUGATION OF HUNGARY

While scything through Hungary the Mongols won a decisive victory at Mohi

Hungarian King Béla IV was already beset with the Cumans, nomadic refugees who had fled the Mongol onslaught in the east and begun raiding in his lands, when the alarm was raised. The Mongol army under Subutai and Batu was coming like a tidal wave.

The invaders justified their assault because the Cumans were technically Mongol subjects; however, the reality was simply the satisfaction of their own continuing lust for conquest. Béla was further obliged to contend with discontent in the ranks of his army, some men concerned for their homes and families as the Cumans raided, but he was determined to resist.

Meanwhile, Subutai and Batu advanced in three columns, penetrating the Carpathian Mountains and driving into Wallachia and Moldavia. When opposing forces met, skirmishes broke out, and each side claimed a small victory here and there. Still, the Mongol juggernaut approached, and Béla decided to confront it moving 100,000 knights and infantry towards the village of Mohi along the Sajó River. Word soon reached the Mongol leaders that their northern flank in Poland was secure, and Batu, after hearing of Béla's foray on to open ground, prepared to launch a surprise attack. The resulting battle would end in the almost complete destruction of Béla's army.

Raiding through the Czech lands

They ravaged Silesia and Moravia but reached high tide in Bohemia

En route to rejoin Subutai and Batu, who were actively campaigning in Hungary, the victorious Mongols under Kadan and Baidar pressed on through Silesia and Moravia, killing, burning and seizing booty. Meanwhile, King Wenceslaus I, hearing of Duke Henry's devastating defeat at Liegnitz, retired to the natural barrier of the Bohemian mountains, harried along the way by advancing Mongol horsemen. As he trudged towards what he hoped would be sanctuary Wenceslaus augmented his army with troops from Thuringia and Saxony. A contingent of soldiers from Austria later joined him as well.

Once ensconced in their mountain strongholds, the Europeans were able to impede the Mongols' use of cavalry, superb shock troops who were at their best on the broad, open steppes. The stout defences prepared by Wenceslaus dissuaded the Mongols from an all-out attack, and they retired to the town of Othmachau, mounting raids that were successfully held at bay by the Europeans. A Mongol attempt to capture the city of Olomouc was also unsuccessful. The skilful defence in the mountains of Bohemia spared the region from the devastation that surrounding areas had suffered. Frustrated but nevertheless enriched, Kadan and Baidar led Mongol raids through Moravia as they withdrew towards Subutai and Batu in Hungary.



Defeated at the Battle of Mohi, King Béla IV flees the field



King Wenceslaus I successfully defended Bohemia against Mongol incursions

Adventure in Austria

Duke Frederick II successfully repulsed the Mongol incursion into Austria

The victory at Mohi opened the door for Mongol probing operations in Austria and potentially into the heart of Central Europe. After crossing into the realm of Austrian Duke Frederick II, the Mongols raided the city of Wiener Neustadt south of Vienna in 1241. Although their entire army was not committed to the advance, the Mongol raiding party sowed fear and confusion among the populace, pillaging and slaughtering those who opposed them. Frederick, however, was a veteran of previous fights with the invaders who had survived the catastrophe at Mohi and cobbled together an alliance that included his capable Austrian knights and soldiers from neighbouring regions. Frederick's army wiped out the small Mongol raiding party and held the line against further incursions. Soon word reached the Mongols in the field that Ögedei Khan had died, and they withdrew to begin the long trek eastward to participate in the election of a new great khan.

"Frederick's army wiped out the Mongol party"



Also known as Frederick the Quarrelsome, Duke Frederick II died in battle in June 1246

The great Genghis Khan initiated an era of Mongol conquest



King Béla IV of Hungary resisted the Mongol invasion in the mid-13th century



A TURN TOWARDS CROATIA

Carrying their winter campaign into Croatia, the Mongols crossed the frozen Danube

Following the Battle of Mohi, the Mongols took advantage of the harshest winter in memory in late 1241, crossing the great River Danube only when they were assured that the ice was thick enough to support their ponies and siege weaponry. Sweeping rapidly through western Hungary, the powerful army again split as Kadan, one of the heroes of the campaign in Poland, led 20,000 men into Croatia.

While in pursuit of King Béla IV in his flight to Austria, the Mongols sacked the city of Zagreb. After suffering extensive casualties while attacking the fortification at the city of Klis, Kadan pursued Béla into Dalmatia,

where the king found temporary refuge with his subjects in various towns.

The Mongol force, probably under strength for a fighting campaign, suffered defeats in battles with forces loyal to Béla. It is likely that the Mongol objective was the capture of the king rather than the subjugation of Croatia.

While Béla managed to escape, Croatia was plundered as the Mongols pulled back. A desperate stand by the Croat army may have occurred at Grobnik Field in 1242, where the defenders were said to have inflicted a decisive defeat on the Mongols of the Golden Horde. However, evidence of such a battle is inconclusive.

INTERLUDE IN BULGARIA

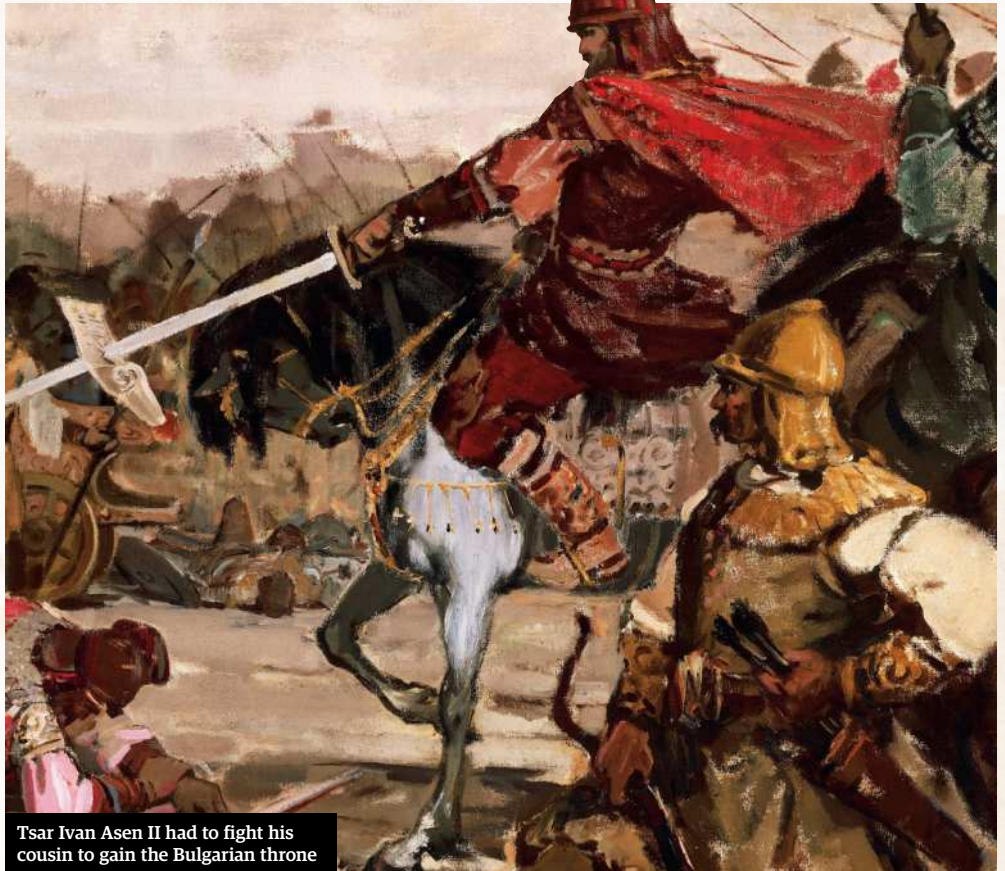
During their eastward withdrawal, a contingent of Mongols raided Bulgaria

The record of the Mongol invasion of Bulgaria is somewhat obscure. Indications are that the region was devastated by a Mongol invasion in 1242 as two armies - under Batu and Kadan - converged, later sacking the capital city of Tarnovo and the port of Anchialos after defeating their Bulgarian defenders.

While Bulgaria may have been subjugated by the Mongols early in their campaign into Eastern and Central Europe, it is known that once the invading tide began to recede they could not resist sending a portion of their army into the region,

"By the mid-13th century Bulgaria was paying tribute"

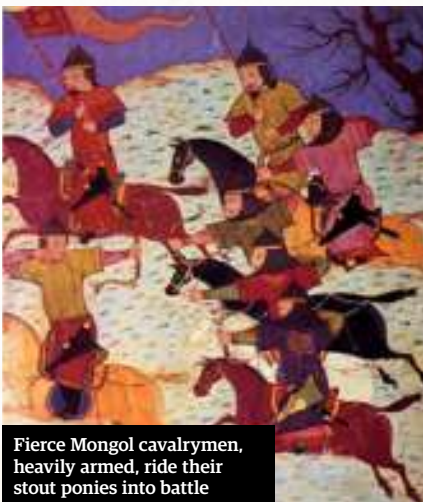
and some scholars assert that the Mongol invasion of Bulgaria stretched into 1243. Further evidence exists to support the idea that a Bulgarian army led by Tsar Ivan Asen II defeated a Mongol force, but whether that Mongol contingent was anything more than a raiding party is lost to history. Sources do confirm that by the mid-13th century the Bulgarian monarchy was paying tribute to the Mongols.



Tsar Ivan Asen II had to fight his cousin to gain the Bulgarian throne



Mongol forces overwhelm the defenders of a city in the Rus' Lands



Fierce Mongol cavalymen, heavily armed, ride their stout ponies into battle

It wasn't all blood and booty

While the invasion of Europe was a ruthless operation that killed hundreds of thousands, it did also increase trade, the exchange of technology and cultural diversity in the region

The Mongol invasion of Europe in the 13th century laid waste to the status quo across much of the continent. While conquered territories remained in servitude to their Mongol masters for years, the influence of the invaders from the east lingered after their empire passed into history. The centre of power in Russia, for example, shifted northwards, giving rise to such notable figures as Prince Alexander Nevsky, a vassal of the Mongols who nevertheless exercised a significant degree of autonomy.

The Mongols' presence also bridged the cultural gap between East and West, facilitating the flow of technology, scientific information and cultural diversity. Among the commodities that became well known in the West were gunpowder, paper and the compass, and the process of printing was introduced. Strange animals, plants and foods were also transported to the continent.

Thanks to the Mongols trade flourished along the fabled Silk Road as emissaries from previously unknown worlds reached out while merchants, adventurers and explorers sought new frontiers. The Mongols kept the Silk Road safe from marauding bandits because it generated tax revenue from commerce.



This tapestry from the 14th century depicts a caravan on the Silk Road

On top of the economic benefits of the Mongols' raids came religious bonuses, namely the Mongol practice of religious tolerance, which allowed for cultural exchange and freedom of expression during a period that has been called the 'Pax Mongolica'.



MARCO POLO'S TRAVELS

The young son of a Venetian merchant family expanded the horizons of the known world, although his contemporaries didn't believe his tales

He was 15 years old before he met his father. Niccolò Polo and his brother Maffeo were travelling merchants, with a chain of trading posts reaching eastward from their home city of Venice into Constantinople, Crimea, and the Mongol Empire. Shortly before Niccolò's son was born the two set off on yet another epic journey, carefully dodging war and political strife across Asia to eventually end up in the court of Mongol emperor Kublai Khan. By the time Niccolò returned to the family home his wife was dead, and his son, raised by an aunt and uncle, was now a teenager on the verge of adulthood, and well educated in all the skills important to a mercantile family:

mathematics and the exchange of foreign currency, appraising goods, and handling cargo ships. The next time the merchant brothers set off on their travels, they took this talented boy with them. It was 1271, and he was just 17.

Marco Polo documented his extraordinary adventures in a book, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, which he

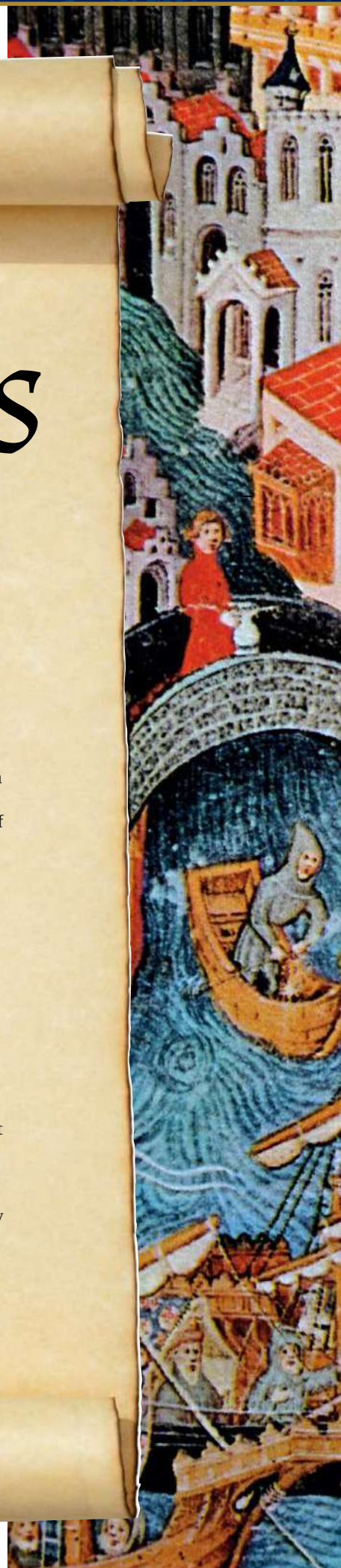
first dictated in later life to the writer Rustichello da Pisa while the two were imprisoned in Genoa. The general public thought it was a romance or a fable. The sophisticated Mongol-Chinese civilisation Polo described was nothing like their western stereotypes of the so-called barbaric east. The belief that Marco Polo had never really visited China was perpetuated for centuries, but we now know that it's far more likely that he was telling the truth.

The narrative begins with a description of his father and uncle's journeys, before picking up where Marco Polo joined their venture. Niccolò and Maffeo had been tasked with delivering a letter from Kublai Khan to the Pope; with this done, they set out again to deliver the reply. This was the beginning of Marco Polo's great adventure.

He was 21 when they arrived in China, and here the young man impressed its ruler, Kublai Khan, so much that he was appointed as an emissary. Not only did he travel widely inside China, he also went to India, Burma (Myanmar), Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. The Polos were popular courtiers, but after 24 years abroad the family began to hanker for their Venetian home. Kublai Khan finally consented to their leaving, giving them one last mission: to escort the princess Kōkōchin to Persia. The journey, via Sumatra, Sri Lanka and India, took two years. Afterwards, Marco Polo returned home to Venice an extremely wealthy man.



A mosaic of Marco Polo in the Municipal Palace of Genoa, Italy. He is holding a copy of his book, also known as *Il Milione*, after his nickname





Painting depicting Marco Polo leaving Venice on his remarkable journey

©Alamy





The rise of the OTTOMAN EMPIRE

From humble beginnings, the Ottomans went on to conquer lands in three continents, forging an empire that lasted for 600 years



It was an empire founded on the promise of a dream, which visited the Turkish tribal chief Osman as he slept soundly one night, outside the home of a holy man.

During his slumber, Osman saw a moon rise from the holy man's breast and sink slowly into his own. Then a tree sprouted from his own navel, spreading its branches and encompassing the entire world. The holy man interpreted this night-vision as God giving Osman imperial office. The dream became reality.

In truth, this vision was actually first communicated in the 15th century, 100 years after Osman's death, but nevertheless it stands as one of the empire's key founding myths and provided temporal and divine authority for the Ottomans' remarkable success.

For the Ottoman Empire was indeed an almighty achievement. Launched from the

plains of the smallest Turkish emirate in western Anatolia, at the height of its power it encompassed a vast domain, stretching from Hungary to the Persian Gulf and from North Africa to the Caucasus, before beginning a slow decline through the 17th century to its final demise in the 1920s.

The Ottomans first made their mark at the turn of the 14th century, when they were just one among many Turkish tribal groups from central Asia vying for prominence in Anatolia, the swathe of land nestled between the Black Sea, the Aegean and the Mediterranean.

This land had once formed part of the Eastern Roman Empire and then the Byzantine Empire. Following the conquest of this great city by the Europeans of the Fourth Crusade during the previous century, however, the Byzantine Empire had diminished, and by 1300 its Asian holdings comprised only a few ports on the Anatolian coast.

The Ottomans' first step towards toppling the Byzantines and establishing a regional authority

came under the leadership of Osman, and at the expense of their fellow Turkish tribes in Anatolia. The region flexed its autonomous muscles during the 1291 succession dispute among their Mongol overlords in Persia. But, as the other Turkish tribes gradually gave up the fight, Osman continued fighting and by 1299, his Ottomans were besieging the city of Nicaea. The Ottomans' great period of conquest was about to begin.

In 1302, the Byzantine emperor Andronicus II, who was alarmed at Osman's quickly growing influence and his perennial raiding of the Byzantine borderlands, mustered his army to put the Turkish tribesmen in their place. The Byzantine force met the Ottomans not far from Constantinople, on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara, where they were ambushed and routed from the field.

This was the Ottomans' first great victory over the Byzantines and luckily for him, it greatly enhanced Osman's reputation, as did his follow-up campaign, which severed communications between the cities of Brusa and Nicaea. Thousands of Turkish households rallied to his banner. As Osman's power grew, Andronicus sought alliances, though these ultimately came to nought, and Ottoman raiding continued until Osman's death around 1323/24. Leadership passed to Osman's son, Orhan, who went on to capture Brusa, establishing the first Ottoman capital in 1326. It would retain its importance even when the capital moved.

"It was an empire founded on the promise of a dream, which visited Turkish tribal chief Osman"

The early Ottoman leaders

Meet the men who made the Ottoman Empire a force to be reckoned with



Osman I: The founder

Little is known about the background of this ruler of a small principality in north-western Anatolia. Both the name of the dynasty and the empire that the dynasty established are derived from his name's Arabic form, Uthmān. He died in 1323/24.



Murad I: The first sultan

Ruling from 1360 to 1389, Murad oversaw rapid Ottoman expansion in Anatolia and the Balkans. During his reign, new forms of government and administration emerged to consolidate Ottoman rule. The Janissaries and the child-levy flowered under his stewardship.



Bayezid I: 'The Thunderbolt'

The most ambitious of the Ottoman leaders, Bayezid ruled from 1389-1402 and founded the first centralised Ottoman state based on traditional Muslim institutions. He also stressed the need to extend Ottoman conquest in Anatolia as well as waging war against the infidels.



Mehmed II: 'The Conqueror'

Mehmed ruled from 1444-46 and then again from 1451-81. Despite his youth, he overruled his advisers and conquered Constantinople, bringing down the Byzantine Empire and establishing what would remain the Ottoman heartland for the next 400 years.



Suleiman I: 'The Magnificent'

Sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 1520 to 1566, Suleiman's bold military campaigns expanded the realm — he evicted the Hospitallers from Rhodes and won the great victory at Mohacs — while making great strides in the fields of law, literature, architecture and art.



Mehmet the Conqueror's entry into the defeated city of Constantinople

The empire expands

Between the 14th and 16th centuries, the Ottoman Empire flowered, threatening the very heart of Europe

In the 1340s, civil war erupted within the Byzantine Empire and the Ottomans were invited to step into imperial affairs, leading to the capture of Gallipoli in 1354, their first foothold in Europe. They extended their influence into the continent when, in 1361, Murad I captured the city of Adrianople, which was renamed Edirne before emerging as the new Ottoman capital in 1365.

The Ottomans' freshly acquired territories now encircled Constantinople and the emperor, John V, signed a treaty that saw his once mighty city become little more than an Ottoman vassal.

With a European base at Edirne, the Ottomans struck out against the Balkans. The Serbian Empire was also burgeoning during this period, but the decisive battle of Kosovo in 1389, though claiming the life of Murad I, saw the Ottomans emerge victorious once again. Murad's son Bayezid succeeded his father and earned the name 'the Thunderbolt', such was his military prowess.

Claiming he would water his horse at the altar of St Peter's in Rome, he quelled rebellion within the empire before taking Bosnia and

Bulgaria, and then finally coming face to face with Western Europe, winning his first engagement against European heavy cavalry at the battle of Nicopolis in 1396. The Ottomans did not escape without setbacks, and the rise of the fabled leader Tamerlane, the successor to the Mongols in the east, checked their power when defeating and capturing Bayezid at Anakara in 1402. It seemed as though the empire would disintegrate amid the power struggle that followed Bayezid's death.

Ottoman fortunes began to revive, however, picking up pace when Sultan Murad II led the first, albeit unsuccessful, siege of Constantinople in 1422. He launched a Hungarian offensive in 1439 that culminated in one of the greatest Ottoman victories at Varna in 1444, where the Hungarians and Western crusading forces, which included the mighty Teutonic Knights, were heavily defeated.

It was Murad's successor, Mehmet II, who was to cement Ottoman power in the European sphere with his more extensive conquests. Known to history as Mehmet the Conqueror, he finally toppled Constantinople in 1453 and ravaged the

The government of the Ottoman Empire

The rise of the Ottoman Empire



The sultan

The sultan had absolute power, though he maintained a council of ministers called a Divan. All laws were made in his name.



The civil service

The Ottomans, like the Romans, enjoyed a powerful civil service with the Grand Vizier chief among them.



The millets

Non-Muslim communities were afforded independence and allowed to appoint their own religious leaders and laws.



The holy men

While the sultan was 'caliph', the successor to the Prophet Muhammad, the religious elite, or ulama, were important lawmakers.



The military elite

The standing army helped police the vast empire and the Ottomans used vassal kings and tribal chiefs to keep their subjects under control.

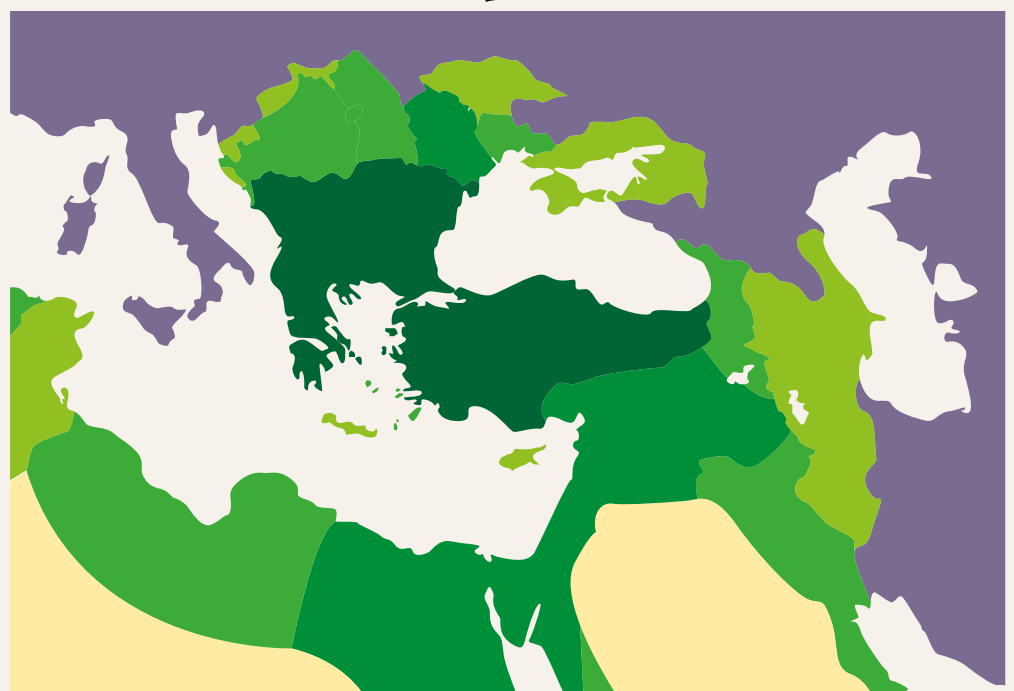
Balkan states. In Greece, the Duchy of Athens surrendered in 1456 and the Ottomans soon conquered the Peloponnese.

The infamous Vlad Tepes (the Impaler) caused problems for the Ottomans in Wallachia and the Knights Hospitaller successfully defended Rhodes, though Mehmet remained unperturbed. He launched his most audacious campaign in 1480 with the invasion of Italy, causing panic in Western Europe. Italy was saved not by Europe's military might but by Mehmet's death in 1481.

In 1520, the man widely perceived as the Ottomans' greatest sultan, Suleiman 'the Magnificent', came to power, capturing Belgrade a year after his accession, taking the Hospitaller island of Rhodes the year after that and then winning his greatest victory in 1526 - when he brought about the collapse of Medieval Hungary.

From now on, the Ottomans would hammer away at the great empire of the Hapsburg dynasty as the rest of Europe trembled. They expanded into North Africa and fought many more famous battles - the Great Siege of Malta (1565), the capture of Cyprus, the great naval conflict at Lepanto (1571) and the slaughter at Kerestes (1596). The enemy was at the gates and war for the European heartland was not far behind.

Ottoman conquests 1481-1683



■ Ottoman Empire in 1481 ■ Conquests of Selim I, 1512-20 ■ Conquests of Suleiman, 1520-66 ■ Conquests, 1566-1683 ■ Desert

The Janissaries

The Ottoman army was a fearsome machine, unlike anything else that Medieval Europe had ever seen, and their elite troops were the mighty Janissaries

In Medieval Europe, the Ottoman army was unique - the entire empire lived for war and one conquest fuelled the next. Even later in the empire's life, during the siege of Baghdad in 1683 when the Persians demanded the contest be settled by single combat, the sultan, Mehmet IV, stepped forward and cut down the Persian champion himself.

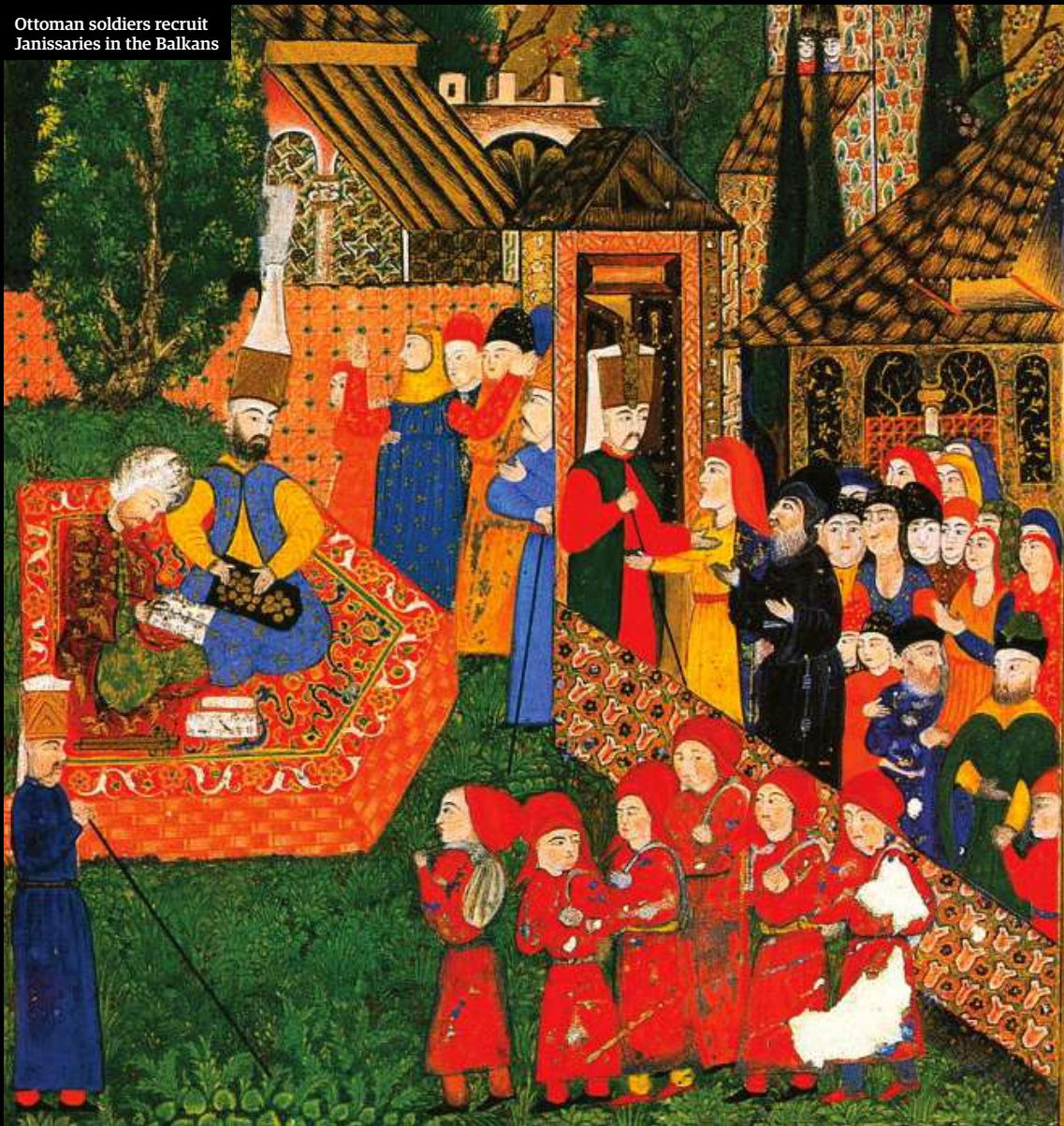
Unlike the European armies they so regularly routed, the Ottoman forces were full-time professionals. Chief among their myriad units

were the Janissaries, the Ottoman elite infantry, who lived solely for war. Even marriage and family were forbidden to them.

Their only love was combat; the only person to who they owed loyalty was the sultan. They were his men, forming his personal bodyguard. They were recruited from Christian slave boys - to enslave fellow Muslims was contrary to religious law - though to describe the Janissaries as a slave-army fails to recognise the honour and prestige they enjoyed within the Ottoman Empire.

The boys surrendered little when they left their homes. Recruited mostly from the Balkan states, they left behind poverty in a rural life that offered little hope of professional advancement. Once converted to Islam, educated and trained, they became important players in an empire that admired martial ability and, as time developed, like the Praetorian Guard in ancient Rome they even became kingmakers, famously rebelling against Osman II in 1622 and restoring Mustapha to the Sultanate.

Ottoman soldiers recruit Janissaries in the Balkans



Recruitment

Why did the sultan buy Christian children to build his forces?

Murad I is widely regarded as the founder of the Janissary units following his recruitment of Christian prisoners of war into his army some time after 1377. It was a move that was enhanced by his successor, Bayezid, who introduced the 'gathering' during the 1380s, a levy on Christian boys, aged between eight and 18 years, from the Balkan states. "We light our lamp with oil taken from the hearts of the infidels," wrote the Sultan Mehmet II in the 1400s.

Ottoman officials would descend upon the Balkan villages every three to seven years and drafted the best-looking, strongest and most intelligent boys to be employed in service of the empire, either as soldiers (in the case of the Janissaries) or administrators or as palace servants.

In the earlier years of empire, the Ottomans were careful not to impoverish their subjects and so would absolve from the levy any boy who was the oldest or the only male child in his family, or any who was a widow's son, and they would never deplete a village of its entire stock. It was in the Ottoman interests to keep Balkan agriculture as buoyant as possible to fuel their empire and keep rebellions quiet. During the 1500s it is estimated that the yearly draft was about 1,000-3,000 boys.

Often families from poor mountain districts would volunteer their sons willingly, delighted to see them step onto the Ottoman career ladder. Though technically slaves, the Janissaries could maintain contact with their families and, as possessions of the sultan himself, could not be bought or sold.

Anatomy of a Janissary

Hat

The Janissary's distinctive headgear featured a holding place for a simple wooden spoon attached to the front as a badge, signifying the shared comradeship among the troopers.

Robe

A capinat, both light and waterproof.

Uniform

The basic trooper wore blue wool, while senior officers had jackets trimmed with fur.

Wide breeches

Into which they stuffed their robes, so they did not hinder them while marching or fighting.

Arquebus

The first Janissaries were ace archers, and were quick to adopt firearms when they became readily available.

Axe

The small hand axe was useful in a tight melee, while palace guards carried long-shafted axes and halberds.

Yatagan sword

A light and single-edged curved blade that became one of the symbols of the corps.

RISE OF THE JANISSARIES

It is impossible to chart the exact growth of Janissary numbers, though one respected study places the numbers as follows:



Janissaries favoured the arquebus when firearms became readily available

TRAINING

Once marched all the way to the Ottoman capital, Constantinople – a test in itself – the boys were circumcised and converted to Islam. Most did this willingly and conversion back to Christianity was rare. They were then tested to discover their best potential, the brightest being selected for the palace schools and future jobs in the Ottoman palaces or civil service.

Those not selected for such lofty positions were marked for military duties and were hired out to Turkish villagers for up to seven years. After this service, they were then packed off to the training crops, with the majority trained for the regular infantry, learning weapon skills and strict discipline, as well as mathematics.

Some of the more promising were selected for education in the households of powerful families, where they were taught more technical skills such as gunnery and carriage driving.

The barrack life instilled a sense of loyalty among the recruits, who also acted as policemen and firemen when the main military bodies were away on campaign. They had the tradition of regimental life drummed into them during these formative years, swearing loyalty to their fellows upon a tray that contained salt, a Koran and a sword, though their ultimate fealty belonged to the sultan. Across the empire they were his eyes, his ears and his ultimate fighting machine.

The Fall of Constantinople

Masters of the surrounding landscape, the dramatic toppling of Constantinople proved a symbolic victory

It was Mehmed the Conqueror who launched the final assault on Constantinople and brought the last vestige of a once-mighty empire into the Ottoman fold. Though the city had long proved little more than a vassal state, he coveted the glory its fall would bring. Succeeding to the Sultanate in 1451, he swiftly mobilised his armies and picked off remaining Byzantine possessions along the Black Sea coast. In 1452, he erected a castle on the European shore of the Bosphorus, opposite a Turkish castle on the Asiatic shore, taking strategic command of this vital waterway.

The Turks now controlled all shipping in and out of the Black Sea and Mehmed's artillery were quick to sink a Venetian ship that defied his order to halt. Mehmed beheaded the crew and impaled the captain, Antonio Rizzi. "As Rizzi's body mouldered in the rain," writes one historian, "the Byzantines made their last, desperate appeals to the West." With the great trading states of Genoa, Venice and Ragusa deeply involved in mercantile activity with the Ottomans, and at odds among themselves, they offered little in the way of support to the Byzantines. The Holy Roman Emperor issued a stern warning to Mehmed, but it fell on deaf ears. The sultan had a warning of his own: the Byzantines should leave the city by 5 March 1453, or suffer his frightening wrath.

It has been said that Mehmed rallied the whole of his empire for the assault on Christendom's most easterly outcrop. But even if figures of 300,000 men seem exaggerated, the forces assembled outside Constantinople's walls still certainly dwarfed those inside, who may have numbered as few as 12,000.

As the vast Turkish fleet sailed into the Sea

of Marmara, a frightening weapon of war was uncovered before the city's outermost walls, a 28-foot cannon with the bronze of its barrel said to be eight inches thick. It had to be dragged into position by 700 men and 60 oxen.

Constantinople's stone defences were almost as formidable, comprising two sets of mighty walls dotted with towers. The emperor also ordered a mighty chain to be slung along the entrance to the Golden Horn, preventing any Turkish ships from launching an assault on the inner sea walls.

The Turks found the opening days difficult, their artillery proving less effective than they'd hoped against the city's lofty walls, while their siege towers were set ablaze and mining efforts repulsed. To add further insult, in April a small flotilla of supply ships successfully ran the Turkish blockade and safely entered the Golden Horn.

Mehmed upped his game and soon pulled off an extraordinary feat of engineering, building a wooden roadway from the Bosphorus to the Springs – over which he hauled 70 ships that took to the Golden Horn. He could now mount sea-borne assaults from much closer quarters.

On 29 May 1453, Mehmed launched his most intense assault, a simultaneous attack from land and sea, his Janissaries achieving the final victory as they pressed through a breached wall. It is presumed the brave Byzantine Emperor, Constantine, died while rallying his men.

With the city at the Ottomans' mercy, Mehmed allowed three days of looting and thousands of civilians were dragged off into slavery, helping to further cow the populace, before the sultan took ownership of this renowned city and began its reconstruction as a Muslim metropolis.



The conquest of Constantinople in 1453



Why was the Ottoman Empire so successful?



A STANDING ARMY

1 The Ottomans were the first since the Roman Empire to maintain a professional army with a brilliant logistical supply chain. While European rulers had to coax their squabbling lords into combat, the Ottomans could call into action a well-oiled war machine.

EXCELLENT MORALE

2 The Ottoman army contained the Janissaries, who lived for war, while their other troops were often motivated by a religious fervour that demanded they wage war against the infidel. Their leaders successfully analysed strategy and tactics and kept morale high.

FLEXIBLE GOVERNANCE

3 While heavy-handed in conquest, the Ottomans were light-handed in governance, tolerating different religious dominations where conversion proved too difficult. They also maintained local laws and customs so that their subjects would better fuel the Ottoman war machine.

The rise of the Ottoman Empire

1 Bombardment begins 6 April

The Ottomans dig in along the Theodosian land wall and employ heavy artillery to batter the Byzantine defences, while the sappers bid to mine beneath the great towers. The Ottomans also use siege towers that loom higher than the city walls in an effort to destroy the defences.

2 A flotilla arrives 20 April

Three papal galleys and a Byzantine transport laden with corn from Sicily and other essential supplies take advantage of good winds to run across the Sea of Marmara. Turkish vessels bid to engage. A lethal game of cat and mouse ensues until finally the Christians reach the Golden Horn and are able to restock Constantinople.

3 Ships sail overland 22 April

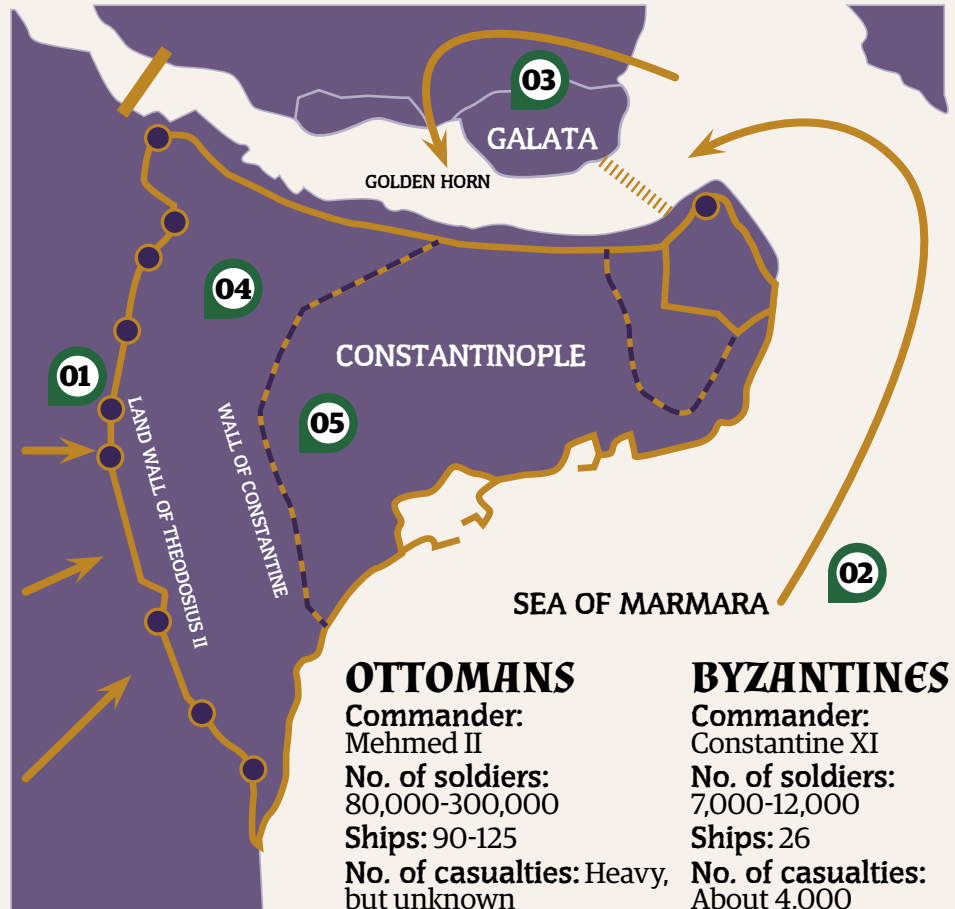
Mehmed transports more than 70 vessels overland and into a river feeding the Golden Horn north. A surprise attack against this newly ensconced fleet goes awry and costs the Christians many lives, which they can ill afford to lose.

4 Final battle 28 May

The weakened walls in the north west suffer the brunt of an initial attack though Mehmet's levies, and Anatolian infantry are beaten back by frenzied Christian defence. A final attack by the elite Janissaries finally turns the tide.

5 The city falls 29 May

The Ottomans break through, with the Circus Gate breached, and the emperor is forced to fall back to the inner walls. Many commentators claim that he is killed in battle while leading the final doomed counter attack.



A CENTURY OF BLOODSHED

Over 100 years of dynastic disputes in the Hundred Years War

**EDWARD III
BECOMES KING**
1327

**SECOND WAR
OF SCOTTISH
INDEPENDENCE
BEGINS**
1332

BATTLE OF SLUYS

24 June 1340

👑 ENGLAND

Taking place off the coast of Flanders and Zeeland, French ships tie themselves together and anchor to create a strong defence. This proves to be a disaster as English longbowmen were able to rain arrows on the immobile French ships, destroying the vast majority of the fleet.

**WAR OF
THE BRETON
SUCCESSION
BEGINS**
1341

BATTLE OF SAINT-OMER

26 July 1340

👑 FRANCE

**BATTLE OF
MORLAIX**
30 September 1342
👑 FRANCE

ENGLAND

BATTLES

FRANCE

**PHILIP VI
BECOMES KING**
1328

**BATTLE OF
CADZAND**
November 1337
👑 ENGLAND

SIEGE OF TOURNAI
July – September 1340
👑 FRANCE

**BATTLE OF
BREST**
18 August 1342
👑 ENGLAND

**BATTLE OF
ARNEMUIDEN**
23 September 1338
👑 FRANCE

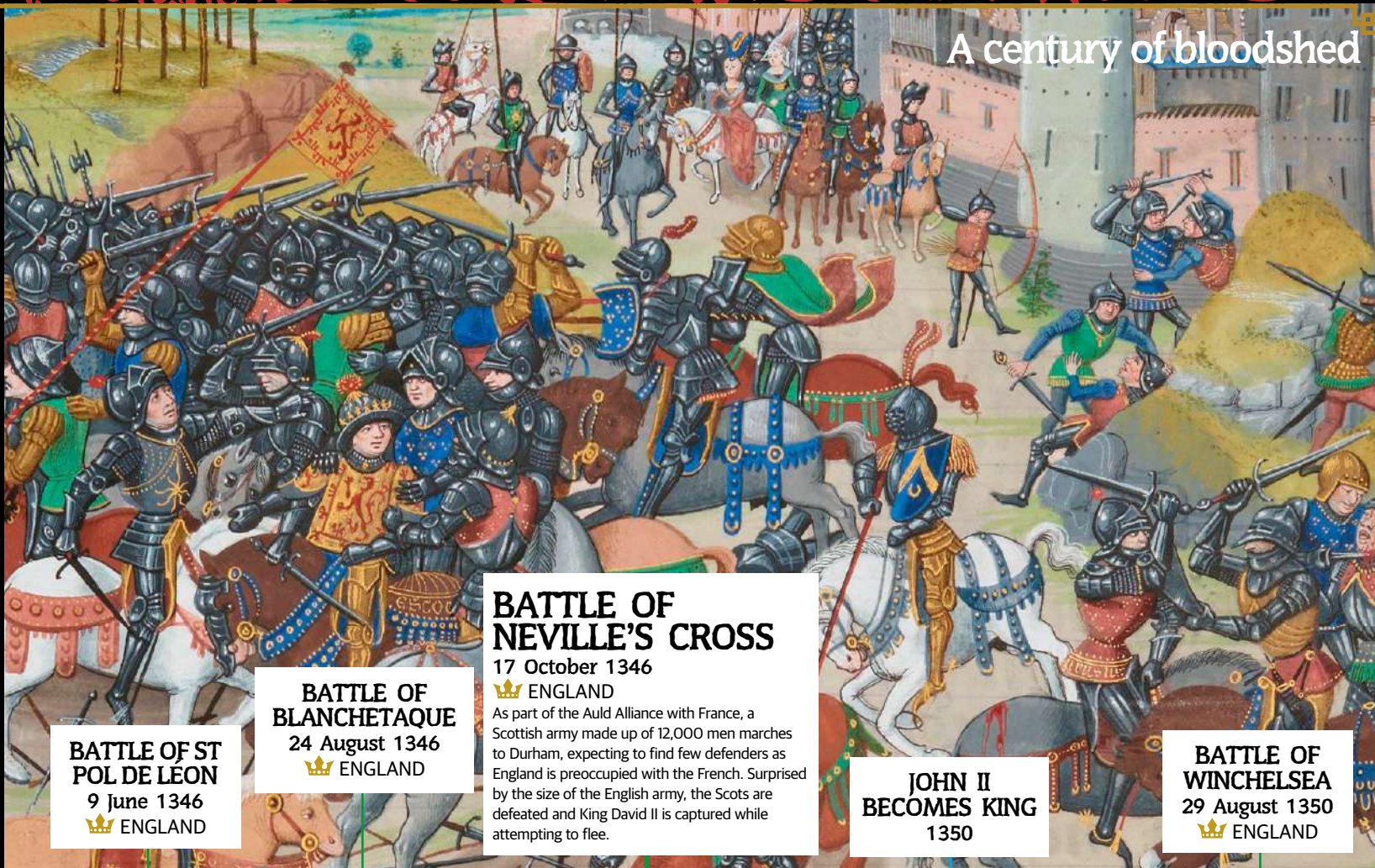
**BATTLE OF
CHAMPTOCEAUX**
14–16 October 1341
👑 FRANCE

BATTLE OF AUBEROCHE

21 October 1345

👑 ENGLAND

French forces attempt to take the village of Auberoche. An English force of 1,500 men, led by Henry, Earl of Derby, ambush the French camp as they sit down to eat and defeat the French army of 7,000. It is rumoured that during the siege, an English messenger from the village was captured and flung back in using a siege engine.



**BATTLE OF ST
POL DE LEON**
9 June 1346
👑 ENGLAND

**BATTLE OF
BLANCHETAQUE**
24 August 1346
👑 ENGLAND

BATTLE OF NEVILLE'S CROSS

17 October 1346

👑 ENGLAND

As part of the Auld Alliance with France, a Scottish army made up of 12,000 men marches to Durham, expecting to find few defenders as England is preoccupied with the French. Surprised by the size of the English army, the Scots are defeated and King David II is captured while attempting to flee.

**JOHN II
BECOMES KING**
1350

**BATTLE OF
WINCHELSEA**
29 August 1350
👑 ENGLAND

BATTLE OF CAEN

26 July 1346

👑 ENGLAND

Edward III's army travels through a number of towns in northwest Normandy, sacking and looting as it goes, hoping to demoralise the French. The English quickly seize and sack the town of Caen, the area's political and financial centre, burning it down, and taking few prisoners.

BATTLE OF CRÉCY

26 August 1346

👑 ENGLAND

SIEGE OF CALAIS

September 1346 – August 1347

👑 ENGLAND

Edward III and his men approach the city, France's closest port to England, but do little over two months while they gather siege equipment. French supply ships are cut off by the English navy, depleting the city's food and water. The city surrenders almost a year later.

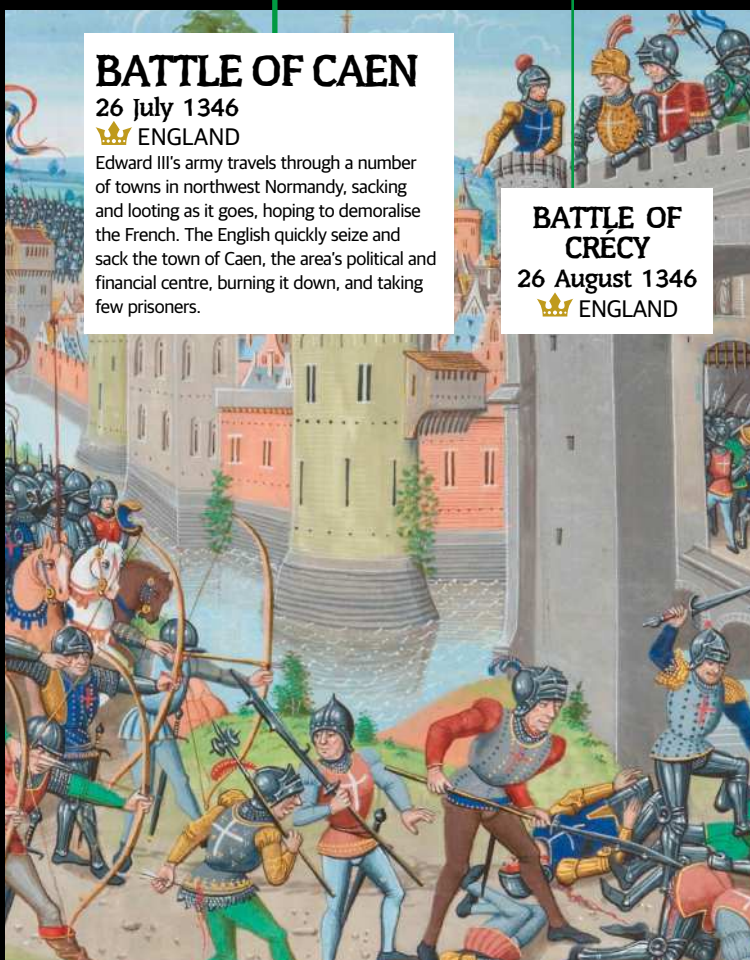
**BATTLE OF LA
ROCHE-DERRIEN**
1347

👑 ENGLAND

**BATTLE OF
ARDRES**

6 June 1351

👑 FRANCE



✦ Middle Ages

COMBAT OF THE THIRTY

26 March 1351

👑 FRANCE

Called one of the most chivalrous battles, 30 knights and squires from each side fight for the duchy of Brittany on behalf of the Houses of Blois and Montfort. They battle for several hours until a French squire mounts a horse, breaking the English line and forcing them to surrender.

TREATY OF
BERWICK ENDS
SECOND WAR
OF SCOTTISH
INDEPENDENCE
1357

BATTLE OF
MONTMURAN
1354

👑 FRANCE

BATTLE OF
COCHEREL

16 May 1364

👑 FRANCE

BATTLE OF NÁJERA

3 April 1367

👑 ENGLAND

As part of the Castilian Civil War, a force made up of troops from England, Aquitaine, Majorca and Navarre defeat an army led by Count Henry of Trastámara, who has the support of France. Despite winning, Edward, the Black Prince, feels they have failed as they haven't captured Henry.

ENGLAND

BATTLES

FRANCE

BATTLE OF
COMBORN

1353

👑 ENGLAND

BATTLE OF
MAURON

1352

👑 ENGLAND

CHARLES V
BECOMES KING

1364

TREATY OF
GUÉRANDE
ENDS WAR OF
THE BRETON
SUCCESSION
1365

BATTLE OF
MONTIEL

14 March 1369

👑 FRANCE

BATTLE OF
AURAY

29 September 1364

👑 ENGLAND

BATTLE OF POITIERS

19 September 1356

👑 ENGLAND

King John II takes an army into battle against Edward, the Black Prince, who is marching north from the south of France and sacking settlements along the way. Despite heavily outnumbering the English forces, John's army is defeated and he and one of his sons are both captured.

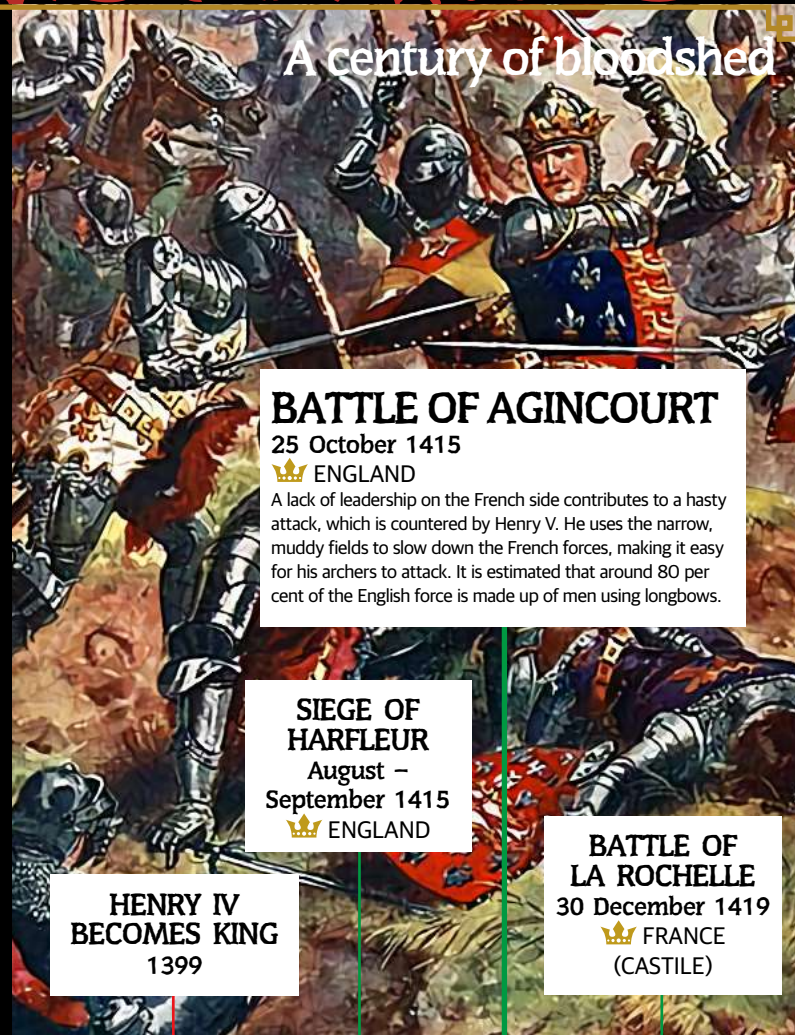


**RICHARD II
BECOMES KING**
1377

**BATTLE OF
LA ROCHELLE**
22-23 June 1372
👑 FRANCE
(CASTILE)

**SIEGE OF
LIMOGES**
September 1370
👑 ENGLAND

**BATTLE OF
CHISEL**
21 March 1373
👑 FRANCE



A century of bloodshed

BATTLE OF AGINCOURT

25 October 1415

👑 ENGLAND

A lack of leadership on the French side contributes to a hasty attack, which is countered by Henry V. He uses the narrow, muddy fields to slow down the French forces, making it easy for his archers to attack. It is estimated that around 80 per cent of the English force is made up of men using longbows.

**SIEGE OF
HARFLEUR**
August –
September 1415
👑 ENGLAND

**HENRY IV
BECOMES KING**
1399

**BATTLE OF
LA ROCHELLE**
30 December 1419
👑 FRANCE
(CASTILE)



BATTLE OF PONTVALLAIN

4 December 1370

👑 FRANCE

The first significant win for France, the battle consists of two conflicts. Bertrand du Guesclin, the constable of France, marches with his army through the night to catch up with English forces, taking them by surprise at Pontvallain. The English flee to Vaas where they are ultimately defeated.

**BATTLE OF
ROOSEBEKE**
27 November 1382
👑 FRANCE

**CHARLES VI
BECOMES KING**
1380



**HENRY V
BECOMES KING**
1413

SIEGE OF ROUEN

July 1418 – January 1419

👑 ENGLAND

Henry V, in his goal of conquering all of Normandy, seizes Rouen. The city is the capital of Normandy and one of the most important towns for the French. English forces surround Rouen to cut off all supplies and when reinforcements don't arrive after several months, the city surrenders.

✂ Middle Ages



BATTLE OF BAUGÉ

22 March 1421

👑 FRANCE

The Duke of Clarence attacks a Franco-Scott army in hopes of catching them by surprise but the enemy forces are larger than expected. The outnumbered English troops are wiped out and the Duke of Clarence dies. There are no clear sources as to how he was killed.

**CHARLES VII
BECOMES KING**
1422



SIEGE OF ORLÉANS

October 1428 – May 1429

👑 FRANCE

English forces attempt to take Orléans, believing that doing so will guarantee that England conquers all of France. After several months of fighting, it looks as if the English might take the city but Joan of Arc arrives with more troops and the battle swings in favour of the French.

**BATTLE OF LA
BROSSINIÈRE**
26 September
1423

👑 FRANCE

ENGLAND

BATTLES

FRANCE

BATTLE OF FRESNAY

3 March 1420

👑 ENGLAND

BATTLE OF MEAUX

October 1421 –
May 1422

👑 ENGLAND

BATTLE OF CRAVANT

31 July 1423

👑 ENGLAND

BATTLE OF ST JAMES

6 March 1426

👑 ENGLAND

**HENRY VI
BECOMES KING**
1422

BATTLE OF VERNEUIL

17 August 1424

👑 ENGLAND

An English army led by John, Duke of Bedford, wipes out almost all of the Scottish forces, including Archibald, Earl of Douglas, and John Stewart, Earl of Buchan. Although some Scots remain in France, this is the last battle that the country plays a significant part in.

A century of bloodshed

**BATTLE OF
THE HERRINGS**
12 February 1429
👑 ENGLAND

**BATTLE OF
LA ROCHELLE**
22-23 June 1372
👑 FRANCE
(CASTILE)

**BATTLE OF
PATAY**
18 June 1429
👑 FRANCE

**BATTLE OF
BEAUGENCY**
16-17 June 1429
👑 FRANCE

BATTLE OF FORMIGNY
15 April 1450
👑 FRANCE

The first major battle to use cannons, the French use them as they can shoot further than the English longbowmen. A Breton force flanks the English, catching them off-guard and leaving them unable to defend properly. The defeat leaves the English without a force to defend Normandy.

BATTLE OF JARGEAU

12 June 1429
👑 FRANCE

Joan of Arc's first offensive conflict sees her lead the French Army along with John II of Alençon. Jargeau is the first battle in France's attempt to recapture the English-controlled cities along the Loire. In the series of skirmishes, the majority of England's top commanders will be killed or captured.

**BATTLE OF
MEUNG-SUR-LOIRE**
15 June 1429
👑 FRANCE

**BATTLE OF
GERBEVOY**
9 May 1435
👑 FRANCE

**BATTLE OF
ROUEN**
29 October 1449
👑 FRANCE

**BATTLE OF
CASTILLON**
17 July 1453
👑 FRANCE



A Gathering Storm

THE ORIGINS OF THE WARS OF THE ROSES

How can we account for one of the most famous conflicts in English history?

According to one 15th-century chronicler, England was on the brink of disaster by the middle of the 1450s. The worst of the "whirlwind and tempest was still impending" but already "you might plainly perceive public and intestine broils fermenting among the princes and nobles of the realm." Nor was the "spirit of contention" limited to society's highest echelons. The "unhappy plague of division effected an entrance" in every "chapter, college, or convent" so that "brother could hardly with any degree of security admit brother into his confidence, or friend a friend."

In the years to come, the chronicler went on to lament, "The slaughter of men was immense; for besides the dukes, earls, barons, and distinguished warriors who were

♦ cruelly slain, multitudes almost innumerable of common people died of their wounds... Such was the state of the kingdom."

There was considerable exaggeration in the chronicler's ominous words, but the series of conflicts that descended upon England during the second half of the 15th century transformed the nation's future. Unsurprisingly, historians have long squabbled - and squabble still - over how such momentous events came to pass. Consensus has always proven to be elusive.

Some scholars have focused on longer-term explanations and a hefty burden of responsibility has often been placed on the shoulders of Edward III. Inaugurating the Hundred Years' War with France came at a hefty financial cost and a cash-strapped monarch was, so the theory goes, obliged to make far too many



Cy commence le 6^e livre Lequel contient en soy. xlv. Chapitres
 Du premier desquelz il commence a parler de la venue du jéu
 roy henry d'angleterre a paris ou il fut couronné a roy de
 france.

Chapitre .

.1.
 passa la mer et vint descen
 dre a Calais Et de la il sen
 alla a Rouen en northmandie
 ou il sejourna vne espace de
 temps Et vne sen alla a po
 thouse qui fut enuiron a lissue
 du mois de novembre Lan mil
 quatre cent et trente Et de

Apres la
 mort de ce
 tres noble
 roy henry.
 d'angleterre
 6^e de ce non
 eut son filz henry. 6^e Le
 quel en l'age de huit ans

✦ Middle Ages



King Richard II of England

◆ concessions to his nobility. Most damagingly, Edward is said to have allowed the expansion of what historians have referred to as “bastard feudalism.” An older paradigm, where allegiance was secured through the granting of land tenure, gave way to a contractual system in which people were bonded to their lords by financial means. While this was efficient for raising armies, it carried inherent risks. Nobles had access to armed bands of retainers who could wreak havoc during local disputes, allegiances (now personal rather than hereditary) could be bought and sold, and public order was constantly under threat.

The net result, it has been argued, was a structural weakening of the monarchy, which became increasingly vulnerable to the machinations of “over-mighty” subjects. Small wonder, then, that the Wars of the Roses would feature figures as influential as Richard, Duke of York, or Warwick the Kingmaker – men who now had the ability, as never before, to shape the nation’s destiny.

This interpretation has come under siege. Rather than imagining an England increasingly menaced by degenerate nobles with access to armed gangs of thugs, we should concede that

◆ “bastard feudalism”, if we even accept the term, worked tolerably well most of the time during both war and peace, and that stability was entirely possible. Nobles usually shared a monarch’s desire for a measure of political equilibrium and, as historian KB McFarlane famously put it, “only an undermighty ruler had anything to fear from overmighty subjects.”

Kingship had not been fatally wounded and, indeed, many institutions such as Parliament and the Common Law continued to function well through much of the 15th century. As McFarlane’s observation suggests, however, everything depended on the character and ability of the ruling monarch, much as it always had. Events leading up to the Wars of the Roses would certainly bear this out.

At this point, 1399 comes into focus. Edward III may not have undermined the structural integrity of the English monarchy but he certainly had an unusually large number of children, whose own progeny created a dizzyingly contested dynastic landscape. In 1399, Henry Bolingbroke (Edward’s grandson via John of Gaunt) usurped Richard II (Edward’s grandson via Edward, the Black Prince) and became Henry IV. For those in the late



Joan of Arc before King Charles VII during the Hundred Years' War

Medieval and early-modern periods, this dramatic act was directly to blame for the outbreak of the Wars of the Roses. God was dispensing divine punishment for such a flagrant overturning of the rightful succession: an act "against God's law, man's allegiance, and oath of fidelity."

We may not subscribe to this view, but the nature of Henry's rise to power did have fateful consequences - his legal claim to the throne was less than pristine.

Richard descended from Edward III's eldest son, while Henry's father was Edward's fourth son. Into the bargain, the descendants of Edward's third son, Lionel of Clarence,

had considerable room for complaint. Henry attempted, rather unconvincingly, to shore up his claim by asserting his descent from Henry III through his mother but it was clear that his power rested solely on popular assent. Much of England had been rather pleased to see the back of Richard II and while this played to Henry's

great advantage, the same logic dictated that if a monarch proved unpopular then his dynastic rights did not guarantee his survival. Perhaps any king was better seen as first-among-equals, to be adjudicated by an increasingly assertive nobility and a decidedly vocal populace. Once again, the talents and reputation of an individual ruler would prove to be of paramount importance.

With Henry IV, we can at least applaud the

political circumstances like conflict with Scotland did not make it easy to reduce tax burdens. Tellingly, Henry went through no less than six royal treasurers between 1399 and 1404.

With the added irritant of potential rival claimants to the English throne and a swathe of disgruntled former allies of Richard II, it is hardly surprising that the nation exhibited a mounting sense of disenchantment. As early as 1401, the

bishop of Lincoln observed that "joy has turned to bitterness, while evils multiply themselves everywhere". Grumbling quickly gave way to more urgent threats: the rising of Owain Glyndŵr in

Wales, the machinations of Henry Hotspur and the rebellion of Archbishop Scrope, to name but a few. The potential vulnerability of the Lancastrian monarchy was not difficult to discern.

With Henry V, it is easy to assume that matters improved dramatically. He was a more dynamic king, working hard in the early part of his reign to quash disorder and restore the royal finances,

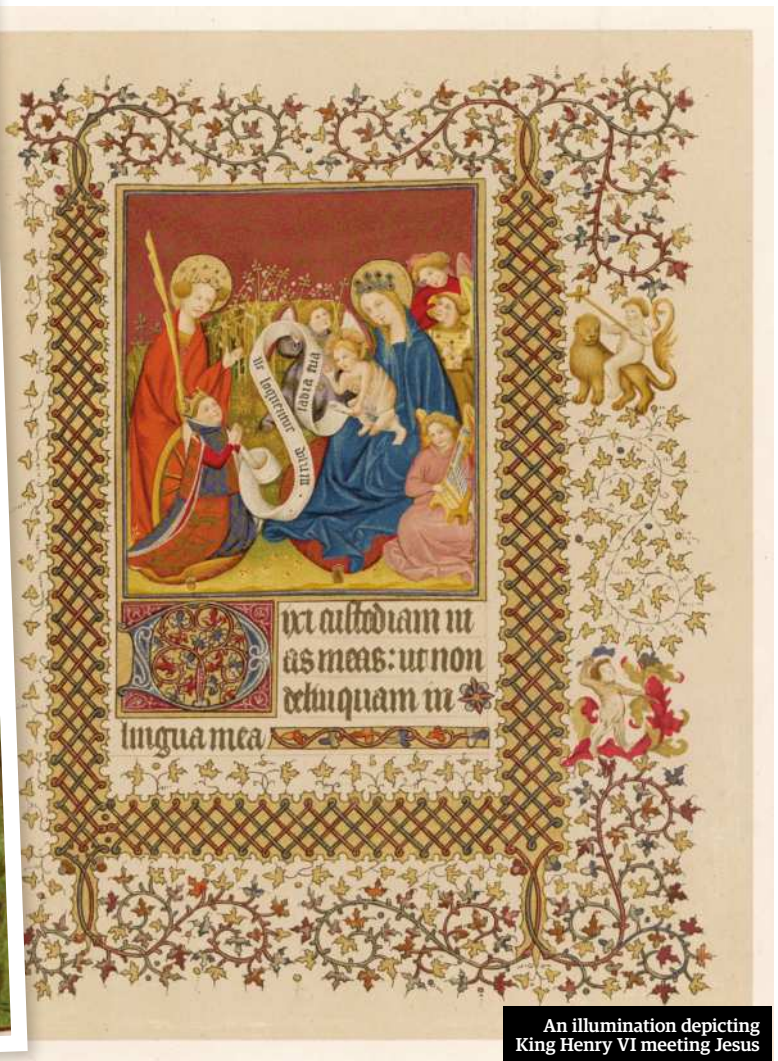
"Everything depended on the character and ability of the ruling monarch, much as it always had"

fact that he managed to weather his reign and lend some legitimacy to the Lancastrian cause. In many ways, he was at risk from the outset. It was argued (not without justification) that Richard II had been a tyrannical, avaricious and arbitrary king, so Henry's case rested almost entirely on being a more palatable ruler. Promises were

hastily made to limit financial exactions but



The Battle of Agincourt, an English victory in the Hundred Years' War



An illumination depicting King Henry VI meeting Jesus

✂ Middle Ages

and winning plaudits for attacking the Lollard heresy. Better yet, his military campaigns in France secured mighty victories like Agincourt, the conquest of Normandy between 1417 and 1419, and by 1420 he had managed to be named heir to the French king Charles VI.

Look a little closer, however, and Henry's legacy contributed significantly to the woes endured by his successor, Henry VI. Even contemporaries wondered whether his adventures in France had more to do with personal ambition than sound statecraft. Would it ever be possible to secure the conquests, or had he embarked upon an ultimately unwinnable war that would place intolerable financial burdens on his successors?

Henry VI would face that very question although, naturally, he was not quite up to the task at the moment of his accession. The arrival of a nine-month old infant as king was a perilous moment for the Lancastrian dynasty but it is significant that no serious

"Over the next few years, circumstances conspired to bring England to the brink of civil war"

challenges were mounted or alternatives offered. The fact that Henry made it through the longest minority rule in English history demonstrates that the institution of the monarchy was not nearly as fragile as some have suggested. Unfortunately, Henry proved to be a deeply flawed, and decidedly unlucky, monarch. Many historians point to his shortcomings as the most convincing proximate cause of the Wars of the Roses.

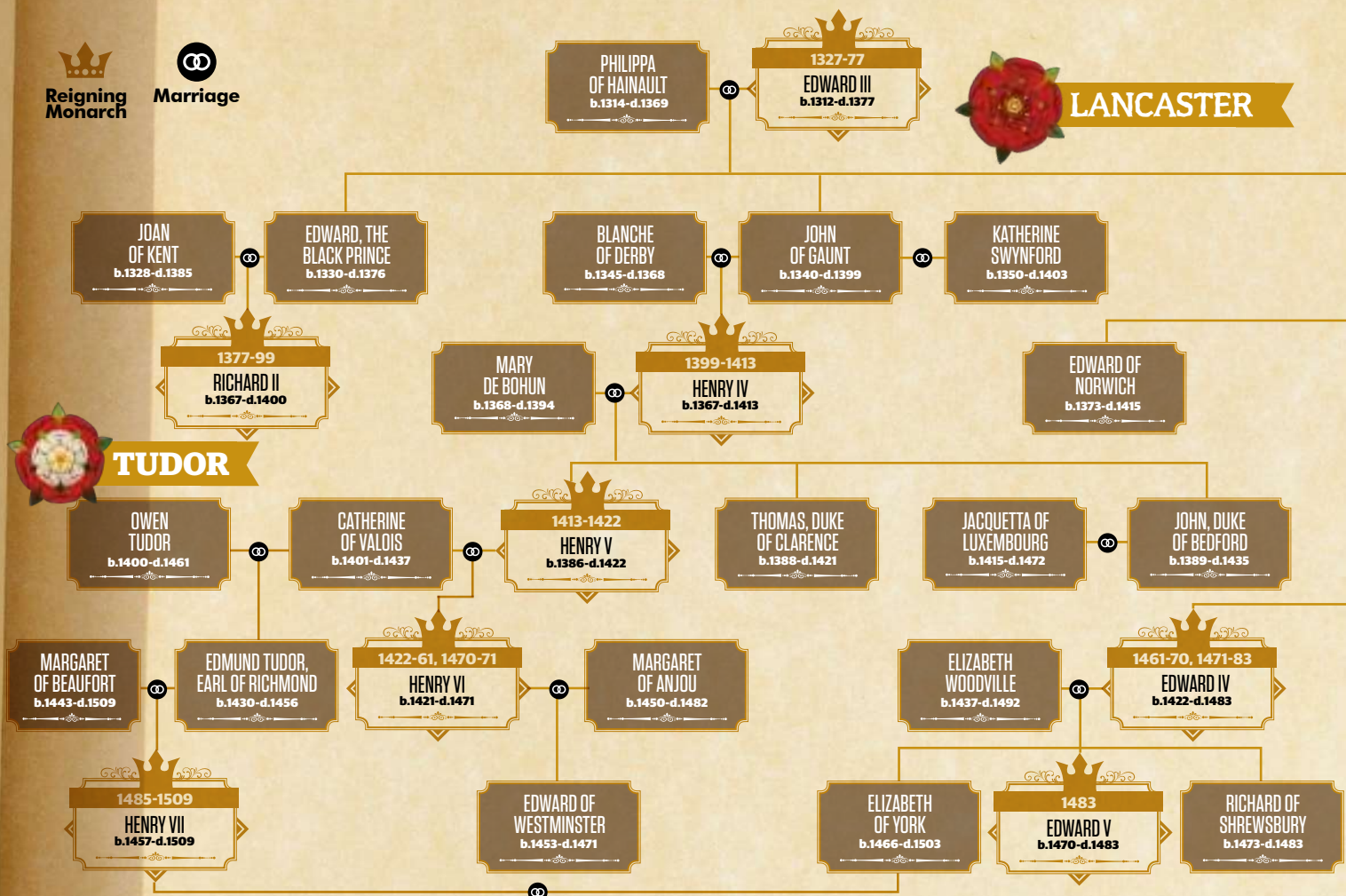
During Henry's minority, resentments and rivalries within the royal family (foreshadowing future events) did not help the cause of efficient governance. The king's protector, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, the Duke of Bedford (like Gloucester,

Henry V's brother), and the bishop of Winchester, Henry Beaufort, were routinely at odds, though irrevocable fallings-out were avoided. Meanwhile, the war in France rumbled on during the 1420s though, following the antics of Joan of Arc, the French monarchy became increasingly assertive. Charles VII was crowned king and, by 1435, France had entered into a compact with England's former Burgundian allies. This would prove a major turning point in the long and winding conflict.

It was at this stage that Henry began to play a meaningful role in English politics, attending his first council meetings, in a more than ceremonial role, in late 1435. His era of personal power

The Lancastrian and Yorkist family tree

How the two great Houses became more and more intertwined over time



A gathering storm

had peaks and troughs. He patently lacked the martial flair of his father and never came close to leading an army in France – a country he never visited after 1432. On the domestic front he appears to have veered between inactivity and intervention and while he should not be dismissed as a puppet, he allowed the growth of unhealthy factionalism among his counsellors. Much was made of a self-serving clique surrounding the king and, while this case can be overstated, there was inherent danger in promoting men who were motivated by personal allegiance rather than deep-seated commitment to the Lancastrian cause.

For all that, consensus over the need to sustain a peaceable realm endured and the 1440s witnessed some attempts to dampen down local

feuds within the nobility. Contrariwise, ludicrously misguided manoeuvres were sometimes made, such as granting the stewardship of Cornwall to Lord Bonville in 1438, and then offering the very same position to Bonville's rival, the Earl of Devon, four years later. This was hardly the way to contain local tensions. On one front, Henry's rule proved to be truly disastrous. Fighting the French was expensive and financial woes were exacerbated by his penchant for showering his supporters with gifts and his need to secure allegiances in the shires. Between 1444 and 1449, the expenditure of the royal household rocketed from £8,000 to £27,000 per year.

Even before Henry took the reins of power, the monarchy's finances were in a parlous state.

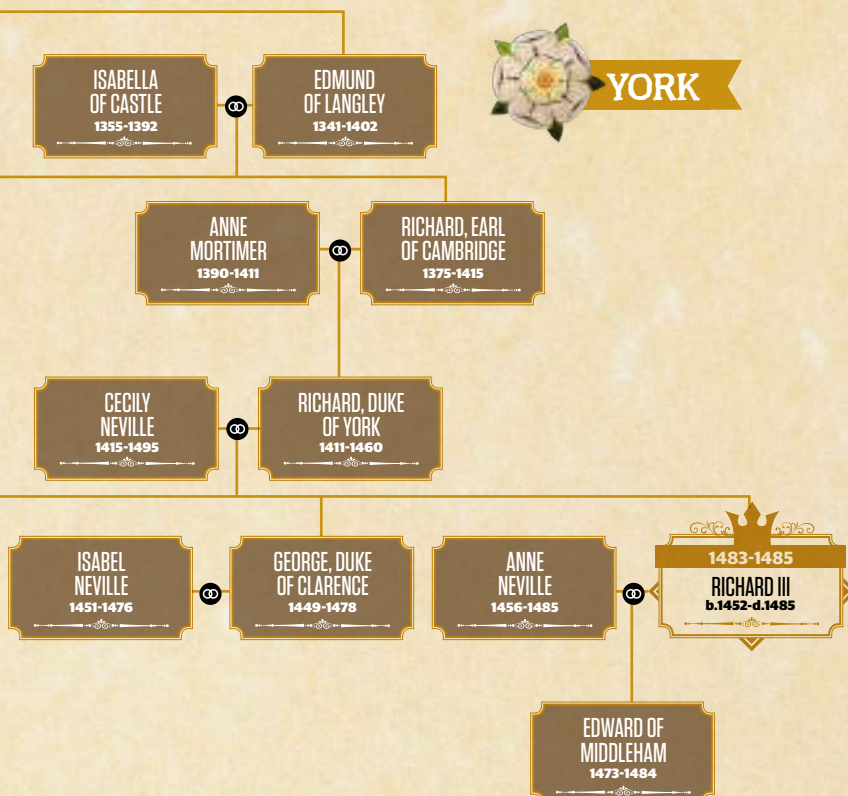
In 1433, a royal debt of £160,000 had to be sustained on an annual income of just £60,000. Parliamentary support also declined and in the entire period between 1437 and 1453, only £240,000 was granted in taxes: this at a time when many of the king's sources of private credit had been exhausted. Broader economic woes – poor levels of agricultural and mercantile output, interruptions to the cloth trade courtesy of the conflict with France – did not help the cause and by 1449, Henry was in a staggering amount of debt: £372,000. By the early 1450s, the royal income had shrunk to just £40,000 per year – just a mere third of what Richard II had managed to rake in during the 1390s. It all added up to an ideal way of undermining the security and stability of the monarchy.

All was far from lost by 1450, of course, but over the next few years, circumstances conspired to bring England to the brink of civil war. The long conflict with France had taken a huge toll on the



Henry VI featured on a groat from his reign

The various dynastic and familial conflicts that played a role in the Wars of the Roses can sometimes seem mind-bogglingly complex. Clarity can, however, be found by following the various lineages down from Edward III. All the chief contenders, and how they related to each other, can readily be located. The three Lancastrian Henries (IV, V and VI) can be traced back to Edward's fourth-born son, John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster. Richard, Duke of York, the father of the Yorkist ruler Edward IV, was the great-grandson of Edward III. Edward IV's son, Edward V, was never crowned and Richard III, the final Yorkist king, was Edward IV's brother.



Edward III, whose descendants were at the heart of the Wars of the Roses



Henry Arthur Payne's plucking of the roses, as depicted on the walls of Westminster

◆◆◆ The rose in bloom ◆◆◆

Why do we refer to the 'Wars of the Roses'?

We are accustomed to referring to the internecine conflicts of the 15th century as the Wars of the Roses, but the phrase is of relatively recent vintage – it never passed the lips of contemporaries. In tracing the phrase's origins, mention is often made of Walter Scott who, in *Anne of Geierstein*, wrote of "the civil discords so dreadfully prosecuted in the wars of the white and red roses."

Similar coinages had, in fact, appeared earlier as one 17th-century tract mentioned the "quarrel of the warring roses". More importantly, the phrase would at least have made sense to those living at the end of the 15th century. The Yorkists deployed the white rose, a symbol throughout the period and, while Lancastrian use of the red rose is harder to locate before the Tudor era, it was well established during the reign of Henry VII. Tellingly, one chronicler, writing shortly after Henry's victory at Bosworth, recorded how "the tusks of the boar" – by which he meant Richard III – "were blunted and the red rose, the avenger of the white, shines upon us."

The Tudors rested their reputation on having brought the wars to an end and restoring peace to the nation – an achievement symbolised by Henry VII's marriage to Elizabeth of York and the combined white and red roses in the famous Tudor emblem. By Shakespeare's time, the notion of the competing roses was firmly secure and in *Henry IV Part I*, supporters of the rival dukes of Somerset and York are to be found gathering white and red roses to indicate their respective allegiances. The phrase 'Wars of the Roses' should, therefore, be regarded as a historical construct and it tends to disguise the fact that the conflict was divided into three separate and very different phases. Nonetheless, it trumps alternatives such as the rather misleading 'Cousins' War'.

nation's finances, but the end of the Hundred Years' War had an equally devastating impact. During the mid-1440s, Henry VI had sought a peaceful resolution (an effort that resulted, among other things, in his marriage to Margaret of Anjou), but hostilities resumed in 1449.

The following year, Normandy was lost and the final blow arrived in 1453 with the loss of Gascony. The impact on English morale was massive, and of far more significance than the return of disheartened troops in search of mischief. Well before 1453, however, it was clear that the French cause was in jeopardy. In combination with the loss of Normandy, England's economic woes and growing criticism of the advisers surrounding the king resulted in a widespread mood of popular discontent.

Nothing captures this quite as well as the rebellion of Jack Cade and his comrades from the southeast who marched on London in 1450. A glance at their list of grievances is telling. Not wanting to be accused of treason, the rebels carefully directed their anger towards the king's evil counsellors: the "insatiable, covetous, malicious persons that daily and nightly are about his highness, and daily inform him that good is evil and evil is good." It was high time for the king to realise that "his false council has lost his law... the common people is destroyed, the sea is lost, France is lost, the king himself is so set that he may not pay for his meat and drink, and he owes more than ever any king of England ought."

The rebellion petered out but its motivations ran deeper. William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk,

regarded by many as the most dangerous of Henry's counsellors, was impeached by Parliament, banished, and murdered on his way out of the realm. In the same year, 1450, Richard, Duke of York, returned unbidden from Ireland and quickly became the focus of those who criticised the existing regime: indeed, he was explicitly mentioned by Cade and his followers. Henry did not trust York and, over the next three years, an uneasy relationship developed that almost

collapsed into direct conflict. Matters always managed to resolve themselves but it was clear that York's manoeuvring, not least his rivalry with Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, had the potential to disrupt politics on a national scale.

Perhaps all that was required to push England into a period of open civil strife and discord was just one more trigger. It finally arrived in 1453 when Henry VI succumbed to a devastating and debilitating illness.



The coronation of Henry IV on 13 October 1399



Henry IV, whose early reign was brimful of perils and indications of troubles to come



ENGLAND'S GAME OF THRONES

Follow our comprehensive timeline of the key events that decided the outcome of the Wars of the Roses



Henry VI is born

The son of warrior king Henry V and Catherine de Valois, Henry VI was crowned king of both England and France during infancy. He would proceed to oversee England's final losses in the Hundred Years' War and famously married the strong and powerful Margaret of Anjou.
6 December 1421

Battle of Losecoat Field

Edward IV raises a new army and attacks Lancastrian troops at Empingham, winning well.
12 March 1470



Battle of Barnet

The final curtain for the Kingmaker, Barnet sees Warwick die at the hand of Yorkist forces of Edward IV.
14 April 1471

Henry VI dies

After a period of incarceration in the Tower of London, it is reported that Henry VI has died. Edward IV is suspected to have ordered his death mere hours before he himself was re-crowned as king.
21 May 1471

Margaret of Anjou is defeated

After spending most of her life caring for her son in an attempt to ensure his succession to the throne of England, his death at the Battle of Tewkesbury is the final blow to the once-powerful queen. With her spirit broken she is exiled back to France, where she spends the remainder of her life living as nothing more than a poor relation of the French king.
1475

The birth of the Kingmaker

Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick was one of the most powerful figures in the entire war, personally overseeing the deposition of two kings is born. He was killed at the Battle of Barnet.
22 November 1428

Margaret of Anjou is born

One of the key players in the Wars of the Roses, Margaret of Anjou, the future wife of King Henry VI, is born in France to René, Duke of Anjou, and Isabel de Lorraine.
23 March 1430

Jasper Tudor is born

Son of legendary Welsh warrior Owen Tudor, who fought alongside Henry V at Agincourt, he would become a commander and play an important role in establishing Henry Tudor as king.
1431

The Battle of Edgecote Moor

After raising an army to put down an uprising in Yorkshire, King Edward IV's forces are intercepted by a Lancastrian one and defeated by Robin of Redesdale.
26 July 1469

Elizabeth of York is born

Elizabeth Woodville and Edward IV's only daughter to be born, Elizabeth of York, would proceed to be queen consort of England under Henry VII. She is the Yorkist partner in the eventual joining of Houses at the end of the Wars of the Roses.
11 February 1466

Battle of Hexham

The final battle of the experienced Lancastrian commander, the duke of Somerset, Hexham saw a large Yorkist victory and Somerset's capture and execution.
15 May 1464

Henry VI is restored to the throne

After being alienated and shunned by his old ally Edward IV, the earl of Warwick strikes a deal with Margaret of Anjou to defeat the Yorkist king. The Kingmaker restores Henry VI to the throne.
30 October 1470



Edward IV dies at 40

After over a decade of successful rule as the king of England in two spells, Edward IV dies suddenly and unexpectedly, throwing the country back into political turmoil. His heir, Edward V, is only 12 years old at the time of his father's death.
9 April 1483

The princes in the Tower

The only two sons alive at the time of their father's death Edward IV, Edward V and Richard of Shrewsbury are incarcerated in the Tower of London during their youth and then mysteriously disappear, likely killed to remove any possibility of them taking the throne. Who ordered the deaths is not known.
1483



A gathering storm

Future Yorkist king of England

The future Edward IV is the first son of Richard Plantagenet and Cicely Neville. Following his father's death at the Battle of Wakefield, Edward would famously join forces with his father's old ally, the earl of Warwick ('the Kingmaker') and take the crown for himself in bloody warfare. He marries Elizabeth Woodville.
28 April 1442



Margaret takes back power

Following Henry VI's miraculous Christmas Day recovery from his madness, his wife wastes no time in reinstating the king as the court's top power and pushes Richard out of the capital.
February 1455



Warwick becomes captain of Calais

Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, becomes the captain of Calais, a powerful financial and military position that leads him into his apex of power, heavily controlling the affairs not just of England but of parts of France, too.
1455

York is Lord Protector

After Henry VI's first mental breakdown, Richard of York returns to London and is named Lord Protector. York imprisons the duke of Somerset in the Tower of London and forges his legendary warring relationship with Margaret of Anjou.
27 March 1453

Margaret Beaufort is born

The future mother of King Henry VII is born at Bletsoe Castle, Bedfordshire, England. She would become the influential matriarch that sees the rise and establishment of the Tudor dynasty.
31 May 1443

Richard marches on London

Disaffected with a list of grievances, Richard of York marches to London from Ireland, demanding Edmund Beaufort, the duke of Somerset, to be removed from office due to perceived failures. He is not supported at court, however, and leaves a year later empty-handed.
1452

The French defeat the English at Castillon

Following the disastrous Battle of Castillon, where French forces bring down the Hundred Years' War with a decisive victory over the English, Henry VI is told of the news and has a mental breakdown.
17 July 1453

First Battle of St Albans

The opening battle of the Wars of the Roses. St Albans is a small and scrappy battle but still leads to the death of three Lancastrian nobles.
22 May 1455

Hostilities resume

After years of strained peace, hostilities break out again, with Richard Neville scoring a victory against a numerically superior foe.
23 September 1459

The Battle of Ludford Bridge

Following a victory at Blore Heath, Yorkist supporters regroup at Ludford. However, a large army led by Henry VI arrives and many of the Yorkists flee.
12 October 1459

York gets upper hand at Northampton

An interesting battle due to the Lancastrian Lord Edmund Grey switching side to the Yorkists mid-battle. The Yorkists won easily and gained the upper hand in the Wars.
10 July 1460

Battle of Wakefield

The last battle for Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York. Riding out from a defensive position at Sandal Castle, Richard is killed by Lancastrian forces.
30 December 1460



Lancastrian army routed

Following his father's defeat at Wakefield, Richard's son Edward routs a Lancastrian army under the leadership of Jasper Tudor.
2 February 1461

Second Battle of St Albans

The follow-up battle to the one that kickstarts the Wars of the Roses. This time there are more men, more deaths and, importantly, a Lancastrian victory.
17 February 1461

Battle of Ferrybridge

A small, precursory skirmish before the decisive and bloody Battle of Towton, Ferrybridge sees the Yorkist leader Lord Fitzwalter killed in action.
28 March 1461

Elizabeth Woodville marries King Edward IV

Coming from a low-ranking family, Woodville is called "the most beautiful woman in the Island of Britain" and she uses this trait to marry advantageously, walking down the aisle with King Edward IV.
1 May 1464



Act of Accord signed

As a compromise, it is agreed that Richard of York is the rightful successor to the throne after Henry VI. This deal excludes Henry's son, Edward of Lancaster, angering Margaret of Anjou.
October 1460

Richard becomes king

Despite being named as Lord Protector by Edward IV, Richard III is crowned king after the affair of the princes in the Tower.
6 July 1483

Buckingham revolts

Richard's ascension is immensely contentious and uprisings take place. One of the largest is a rebellion orchestrated by Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, who is especially disaffected. However, his rebellion fails.
18 October 1483



The king's mother arrives at courts

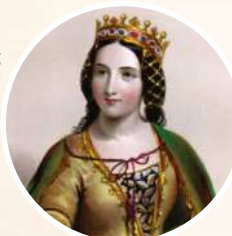
Following her son Henry's victory at the Battle of Bosworth, Henry's mother, Margaret Beaufort, arrives at court and creates a new title for herself, 'My Lady the King's Mother', ensuring herself legal and social independence.
1485

Henry unites the Houses

In his marriage to Elizabeth of York, Henry VII finally unites the remnants of the two warring Houses of York and Lancaster. The product of this marriage marks the beginning of the House of Tudor and the Tudor Dynasty, which would go on to rule England until 24 March 1603.
18 January 1486

Anne Neville dies

The wife of embattled king Richard III dies of what is now believed to be tuberculosis at Westminster, London. There is an eclipse on the same day, which people see as an omen depicting the impending fall of Richard.
16 March 1485



Battle of Bosworth

The decisive and climactic battle of the War of the Roses sees the Yorkist king Richard III killed in combat, his 10,000-strong force routed. His enemy, the young and charismatic Henry Tudor, carve a direct path to the throne of England. He would be crowned Henry VII months later.
22 August 1485

The War of the Roses end

After more than 30 years of turmoil, chaos, warfare, infighting, backstabbing, side-changing, murdering and plotting, the Wars of the Roses end with Henry Tudor quashing the last remaining threat to the throne at the Battle of Stoke. He proceeds to rule for over 20 years, despite a couple of minor threats to his crown.
16 June 1487





DOWNFALL AND LEGACY OF THE KNIGHTS

*The masters of the Medieval battlefield, knights had their spurs
stripped by advancing technology*



For centuries, European politics and warfare were dominated by the knightly classes. On the battlefield they formed the armoured core of an army, ready to smash the enemy with their superior training, weapons and armour. On the political battlefield they made up the majority of the nobility where kings, lords, dukes and barons vied for power. But changing military technology and tactics saw their battlefield role diminished. Centralisation of power and the growth of nationalism saw their political powers also change, as the title no longer held the power it did in the Middle Ages. These changes were gradual and occurred over hundreds of years, but did not see the knight disappear. Knighthoods and knightly orders still exist in today's society, although their role is now almost purely ceremonial, with some orders focusing on charity work – a far cry from their violent past.

From the 15th century onwards, the knight, who had enjoyed being top of the military hierarchy, saw its battlefield effectiveness begin to decline. Due to their high station, lengthy training and expensive equipment, knights would only make up a small percentage of a Medieval force's mounted contingent. For instance, by the time Henry V was campaigning in France and won his famous victory at Agincourt, less than five per cent of the English cavalry were composed of knights. The bulk of

his mounted force, along with other contemporary armies, were sergeants, men-at-arms and squires. These soldiers filled largely the same tactical position that knights had in previous centuries, but lacked the title and prestige.

No single factor can be considered to explain this shift, but it was likely a combination of changing roles of knights (and higher-ranking individuals) in society, as well as a possible decrease in the number of people taking up knighthood. In late Medieval England, military service had shifted away from one of feudal obligation, to a system based more on raising taxes, and then hiring soldiers.

The introduction and improvement of firearms played a major role in the decline of heavily armoured cavalry. Before gunpowder weapons were in common use, wounding or killing a knight clad heel to toe in armour was quite a feat. Polearms, picks, hammers and maces were all employed against cavalry. When firearms became more commonplace on the battlefield, bringing with them excellent armour penetration, knights and armourers needed a solution. The initial reaction was to make the armour thicker so that the projectiles would simply bounce off. A simple answer in theory, but while highly skilled blacksmiths could make lighter, projectile-resistant breastplates, the majority of armour became too heavy to be worn effectively or efficiently. By the 1600s, cavalry armour had been reduced to bracers

Up close and personal

Knights were not the only formidable opponent on the battlefield

The decline of the knight on the battlefield is sometimes paralleled with the effectiveness of projectile weapons like the longbow, crossbow and firearm. During the Hundred Years' War at battles like Agincourt and Crécy, the English bowmen took a fearsome toll on the feared French knights. While these victories highlighted some of the shortcomings of heavily armoured and slow-maneuvring units, they did little to actively decrease the use of knights on the battlefield.

In France, the position of master of the crossbows was a coveted royal appointment, and was chosen by the king himself. The master of the crossbows would have been an aristocrat who would fight as a mounted knight in combat, rather than as a crossbowman, as his station might suggest. Similarly, English kings would have bowmen as part of their retinue and bodyguard, along with household knights. The difference in equipment, training and wages that these fighting received was what set them apart, not the battlefield philosophy that they followed.

The idea that knights, or the chivalric code that is often mentioned as justification, held disdain for ranged weapons over any other does not hold weight. The role of the knight declined for several reasons, although hatred for bows was not one.



Knights had no problem using any weapon at their disposal to win the day on the battlefield

and a breastplate, considered the bare minimum to provide protection and still allow the rider some flexibility.

The iconic mounted weapon of the knight, the lance, was also becoming obsolete. A shock weapon, the lance was used on the charge to break enemy formations, but it was cumbersome and tended to shatter on impact leaving it a one-hit wonder. Gunpowder weapons had reached a level of sophistication where they could be made as handheld pistols. Now the lance's main rival, the pistol had better armour penetration and greater range, and its small size enabled a rider to carry multiple loaded firearms over a single lance. They could also be used in quick succession, allowing a unit of cavalry to smash an enemy formation much more effectively. Once advancing to pistol range, the front rank would fire and 'peel' off to the back of the formation, leaving the second rank to do the same. This tactic, usually employing around 12 horsemen deep, was called 'caracoling', and effectively punched through or broke up enemy formations. With the reduction of armour and improvement of weapons, the cost of training and outfitting this new generation of cavalry also decreased. Lower wages meant larger unit sizes, and in the harsh terms of war, this cost-to-benefit ratio was seen as more than acceptable. The speed in which firearms overtook the battlefield also

The decline of the knight went in tandem with the rise of European nations' need for a standing, professional army

hastened the knight's downfall. In the beginning of the 16th century, infantry were mostly armed with pikes, which gave them a long reach and a decent measure of protection against mounted men.

Soldiers like Swiss mercenaries or Landsknechts would have less than half their formation armed with guns. A century later, firearms would come to outnumber pikes two to one, spelling disaster for mounted units.

This evolution of cavalry saw the traditional mounted knight sidelined. While mounted units were used up until World War I, their battlefield role and equipment was forced to evolve.

The decline of the knight went in tandem with the rise of European nations' need for a standing, professional army. The near constant warfare of the 17th century, especially the near-catastrophic Thirty Years' War, showed rulers that they could not rely on feudal levies or mercenary troops to protect their kingdoms. A lord's household knights would be well trained and equipped, but would only make up a fraction of the army. Levies were usually untrained or not of the same standard as professional soldiers. Mercenaries were becoming a more favourable option as they came with their own training and weapons but were expensive and, if unpaid or left unchecked, could wreak havoc across the countryside, both friend and foe. In a world where political power stemmed from the size of your military force, a class of warrior that was expensive, numerically small and



Mercenary troops, especially during the Thirty Years' War, had the advantage of not requiring a substantial financial and time investment to fight, unlike a unit of knights



The Order of the Garter, founded in the 14th century, is among the oldest and most prestigious knightly orders still in existence

not totally beholden to any one ruler was simply not practical. Centralisation of governmental power meant that troops could be raised and supplied the year round with the nation footing the bill, rather than unreliable feudal levies that were beholden to their liege lord first and the nation or ruler second. A knight was a political figure as well as a military one, historically expected to provide troops for a ruler's army, as well as form the core of their elite fighting force. With the centralisation of power and rise of the standing army coinciding with the rise of nationalism, men fought for king and country as opposed to just the king, as in previous centuries

The Renaissance, and its revival of humanist ideas, was damaging to the character and perception of the knight. With humanism attacking Medieval social culture, the concept of chivalry came under fire. Knightly virtue was inexorably tied to this concept, and so the view of the virtuous knight fell by the wayside. In 17th-century novels like *Don Quixote*, the main character extols chivalric virtues as good and true, but they are shown to be antiquated by the rest of the cast. Much like the old battlefield role of the knight had been sidelined, so too had the moral code.

The character of the knight, romanticised almost beyond recognition, made a comeback during the Victorian period. Stifling social constraints made anything Medieval seem thrilling, dangerous and romantic. Social upheaval in the form of the industrial revolution saw societal norms become challenged. Things like prearranged gender roles

were turned on their heads, with both sexes now working in factories. Manual labour was usually seen as a masculine line of work, and the rise of the knight as a paragon of virtue comes from this. The idea of a strong, martial and above all masculine character stepping up to defend a woman's virtue was the product of a societal anxiety from these perceived challenges to a man's role in the world. This spawned the image of a brave knight defending a damsel in distress.

Knights, individuals as well as knightly orders, are still present in society today, although their role has somewhat changed. The militaristic orders, like the Knights Hospitaller, have slowly evolved throughout the centuries, and have now abandoned their combat role in place of charitable work and secularisation. Other orders, like the English Order of the Garter, have similarly put their militaristic origins to bed. Now open to any citizen, in an effort to make the award more egalitarian, the award is now purely symbolic. Those receiving it have contributed something significant to their particular field, and on the upside are no longer required to give military service to the country. The title of knight is still involved with a country's royalty, and usually only the ruling monarch (like the queen in the United Kingdom) can conduct the ceremonies. These are often lavish displays that highlight the achievement of the participant.

A mounted legacy

The legend of the knight would not die, but merely change with time

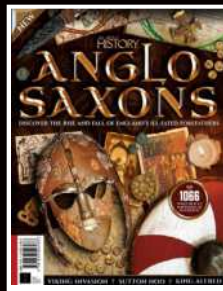
The battlefield role of the knight was not one that died with them, but rather it evolved. Units like cuirassiers, which came about in the 16th century and were so named from the metal breastplates or cuirass that they adopted instead of full armour, stepped up to fill the knight's role. These heavy cavalry used tall men on large horses bred for war that would thunder across the battlefield and break apart enemy formations. Although used for a few centuries after the decline of the knight, the cuirassiers found their footing in the Napoleonic Wars.

With lighter cavalry taking the role of scouts and skirmishers, the heavy cavalry were free to be used like an iron fist, smashing apart the enemy line in a flurry of steel and horses. Gone were the lances of the Medieval knight, and heavy, straight cavalry sabres replaced them. Much like a charging mass of Medieval knights, the cuirassiers' charge carried with it great psychological impact. A wall of armour and beast crashing down upon an enemy was sometimes enough to break an enemy formation before contact was made. In this way, the military legacy of the knight was very much continued.

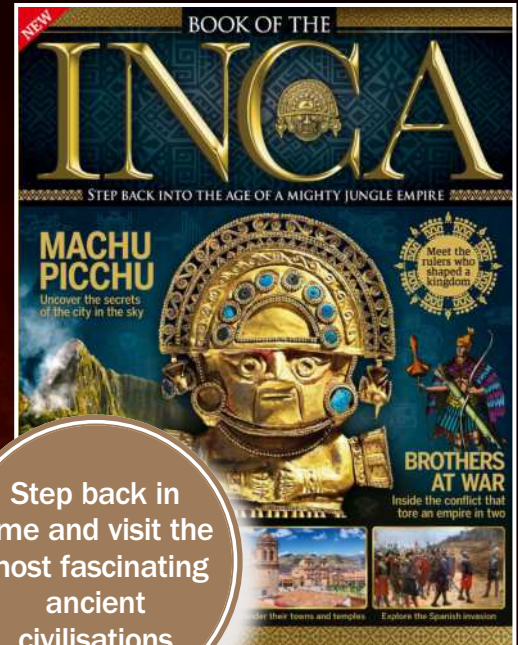


Cuirassiers can be seen as a spiritual successor to the medieval knight

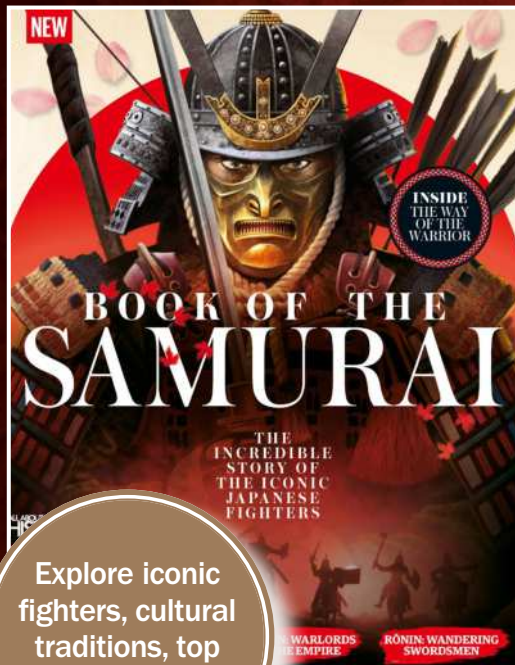
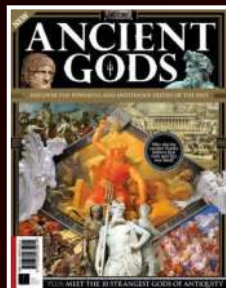
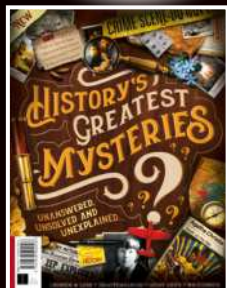
"Things like prearranged gender roles were turned on their heads, with both sexes now working in factories"



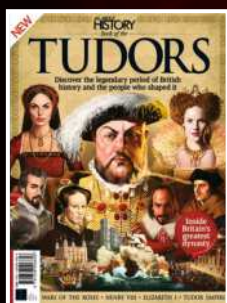
Examine world wars and epic battles through maps and rare documents



Step back in time and visit the most fascinating ancient civilisations



Explore iconic fighters, cultural traditions, top tactics and weapons



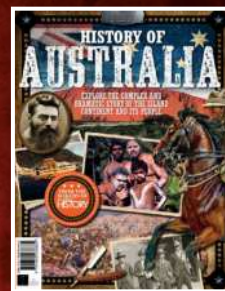
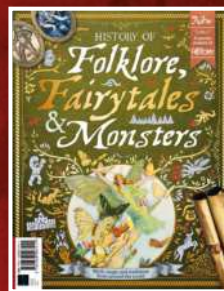
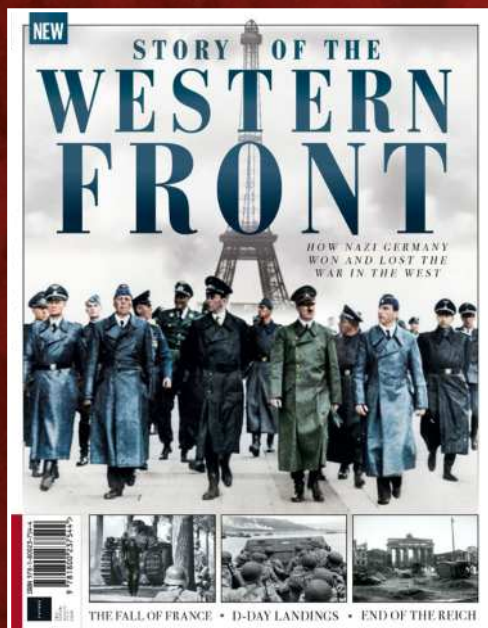
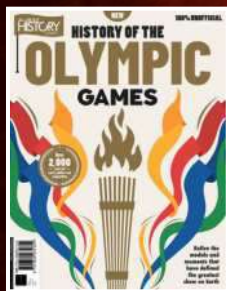
Get great savings when you buy direct from us



1000s of great titles, many not available anywhere else

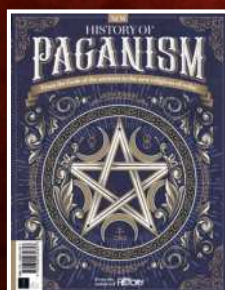
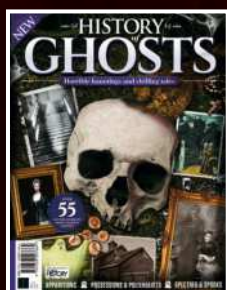


World-wide delivery and super-safe ordering



STEP BACK IN TIME WITH OUR HISTORY TITLES

Immerse yourself in a world of emperors, pioneers, conquerors and legends and discover the events that shaped humankind



Discover the truth behind history's most shameful chapters

Follow us on Instagram  @futurebookazines



www.magazinesdirect.com

Magazines, back issues & bookazines.



SUBSCRIBE & SAVE UP TO 61%

Delivered direct to your door
or straight to your device



Choose from over 80 magazines and make great savings off the store price!

Binders, books and back issues also available

Simply visit www.magazinesdirect.com

✓ No hidden costs 🚚 Shipping included in all prices 🌐 We deliver to over 100 countries 🔒 Secure online payment



magazinesdirect.com
Official Magazine Subscription Store

WHAT DID
BYZANTIUM
DO FOR US?

HOW DID EUROPE
RISE FROM THE
ASHES OF ROME?

WHO WAS
CHARLEMAGNE?

THE

EVERYTHING
YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

MIDDLE AGES

WHAT WAS
THE ISLAMIC
GOLDEN AGE?

WHAT DID
MAGNA CARTA
ACHIEVE?

WHY DID THE
VIKINGS RAID
OTHER LANDS?

WAS IT
REALLY
THE DARK
AGES?



An age of change

Discover 1000 years of history and how the world changed during that time



Christian Europe

How the Church held sway over kings and forced them to bend to its will



Chivalry and war

Why brave, courteous, but bloodthirsty knights were the heroes of the era



A wider world

What were the threats, and advantages, that came from outside Europe?